200 pp.

AFTA

$1.49

#2

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Bill-Dale Marcinko
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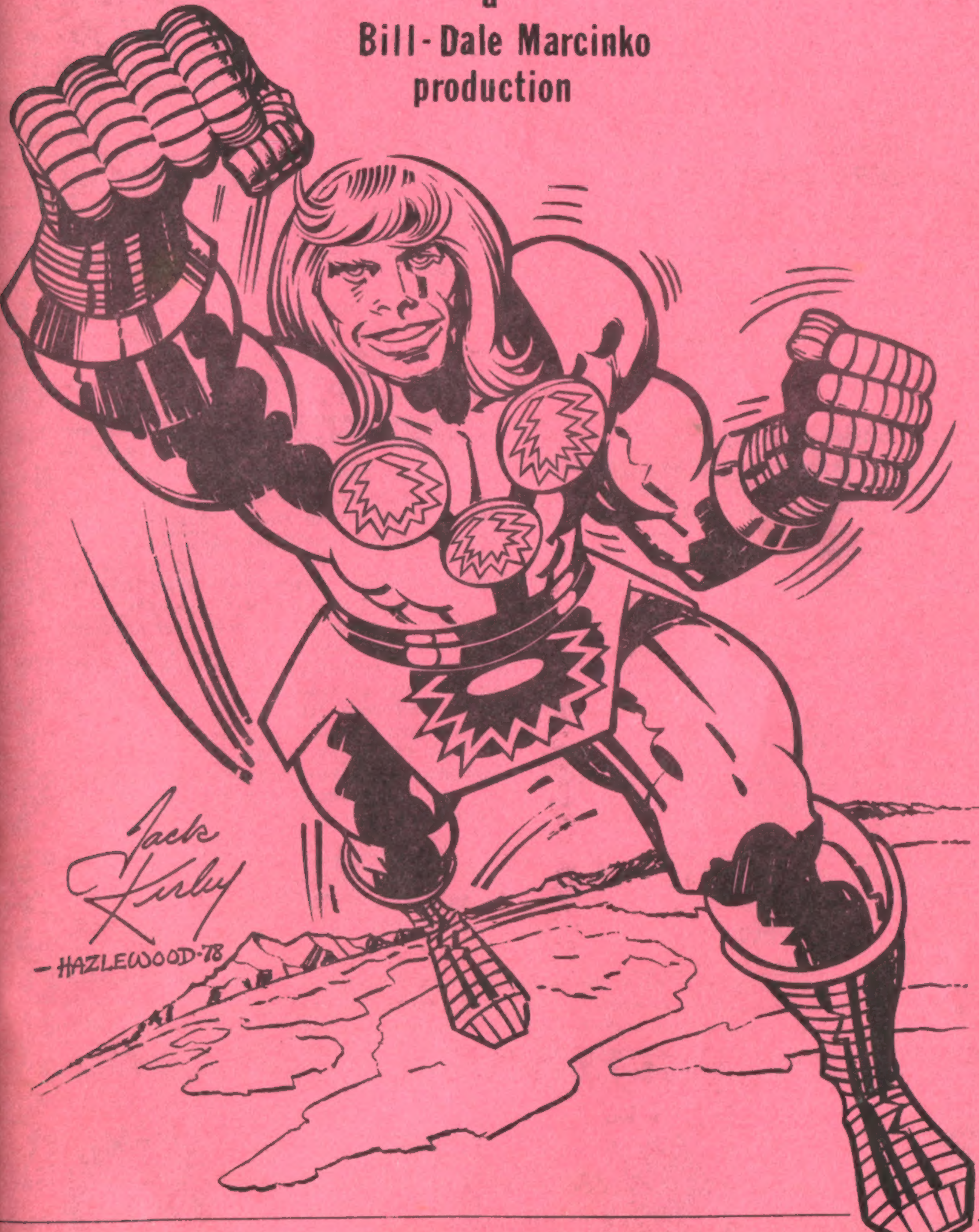
Jack Kirby
-HAZLEWOOD-78

PEREZ INTERVIEW, KIRBY, ARE COMICS SEXIST?, CE3K/STAR WARS, ROCKY HORROR, COMIC FILM, RECORD, TV REVIEWS...

AFTA

ASCENSION FROM THE ASHES

NUMBER 2
SPECIAL CHRISTMAS ISSUE

> "I think they should move Christmas to July, then the stores wouldn't be so crowded..."

HO HO

LOWDOWN PAGE

AFTA is published 5 times a year, at the end of the month, in March, June, August, October, and January. No subscriptions accepted past issue #5. This issue is the August, 1978 issue. #3 will be out the end of October.

SINGLE ORDERS SUBSCRIPTIONS

AFTA #1 - $ .99 (plus 50¢ post.)
AFTA #2 - $1.49 (plus 50¢ post.)
AFTA #3 - $1.49 (plus 50¢ post.)
AFTA #1-5 - $6.00 (save $2.45)
AFTA #2-5 - $5.00 (save $2.96)
AFTA #3-5 - $4.00 (save $ .97)
All subscriptions to AFTA will end with issue #5.

HAND OUT SWAP FLYERS

Do you have a fan zine, convention, or product you would like to promote? Send me your flyers (no catalogs, though), and I'll include them with my letters, pass them out at all New York and New Jersey conventions and (if weight permits), even include them with copies of AFTA. If you are going to a con, and would like to set out some flyers on tables for AFTA, just write and tell me how many you want.

FREE PLUGS

I will run, free of charge, any announcements of complaints of mail fraud, fan clubs or apas that are forming, or news and advertisements of fan magazines, books, or portfolios, if you plug AFTA in return.

QUANTITY RATES

All issues of AFTA are available at a discount to dealers and bookstores. AFTA #1 is 75¢ each, #2-on are $1.00 each, but there is a minimum order of 10 for these rates. I will send you copies on consignment (i.e. pay me after you sell them, return what's left)

To everyone-- Please put pressure on comic book specialty shops, movie material stores, bookstores and college bookstores to carry AFTA. I am very interested in getting the attention of STYX COMIC SERVICE and WELL NEWS SERVICE --write them a letter

OTHER FANZINE EDITORS

AFTA is available for trade for other fanzines. Fan editors-- please send me your zines. I will review all books, zines, and portfolios sent to me, in the next issue of AFTA, or PHOENIX, or both.

CONTRIBUTING

AFTA doesn't have a closed circle of staff writers, like some zines. Everyone is encouraged to submit articles, opinion pieces, and reviews, and humorous art pieces of 1 or 2 pages (no larger than 8" x 11"). I would prefer you call or write in advance before you send anything, and that you enclose a s.a.s.e. with all work. No fiction pieces or comic strips (over 2 pages) just now, ok? I am always in need of spot illos (3" x 5"), in black ink on white paper, have to do with recent comics, films, tv, music, preferably in a humorous, satirical, or offbeat fashion. No sexist pornography or bondage art, please, unless you want a lecture with your returned art.

BILL DALE MARCINKO, EDITOR/PUBLISHER

47 CRATER AVENUE
WHARTON, NJ 07885
from May 15-August 31

RPO 5009, RUTGERS U.
NEW BRUNSWICK, NJ 08903
from September 1-May 14

Due to repeated calls made to my home of a threatening nature, I don't feel it is wise to reveal my phone number in AFTA. If you want to know, just write me; chances are you can have it. I just don't want to give the number to any more kooks and sickies than already know.

Everything in AFTA #2 is (c) 1978 by me, 'cept for the cover, which is (c) Jack Kirby, and the art marked "IF", which is (c) INTERFAN. AFTA is a member in good standing of the following:

The UFO is a group of fan editors who help promote quality in fan publishing. To join, write Jay Zilber, c/o Ken Gale, 220 E. 85th St., Apt. 5R, New York, NY 10028. Mention AFTA.
The UFO Newsletter, TETRAGRAMMATON FRAGMENTS, has contribs by UFO's fan eds, including yours truly, 50¢ per copy, first class, from Jay Z.

THE WSA-PA fights fraud and fosters honest among fan editors and advertisers. Write to: Ashley Scott Tillman, 2410 Wensley Drive, Charlotte, NC 28210 All you fan editors out there, join!!!

The WSA is the consumer fraud bureau for fans and collectors There's a membership drive on now. Write: Harry A. Hopkins, P.O. Box 873, Langley AFB, VA 23665. Ask Harry to send you a flyer on the FANDOM DIRECTORY, a terrific project.

The IFICC is an inflation fighting group, which fosters low prices and friendly dealings between fans. Write: Chester Cox, PO Box 356, Shaw AFB, SC 29152 to join.

Bill-Dale Marcinko
founder, co-editor

AFTA NO. 2
PART ONE

Mr. Clavell Spim
co-editor

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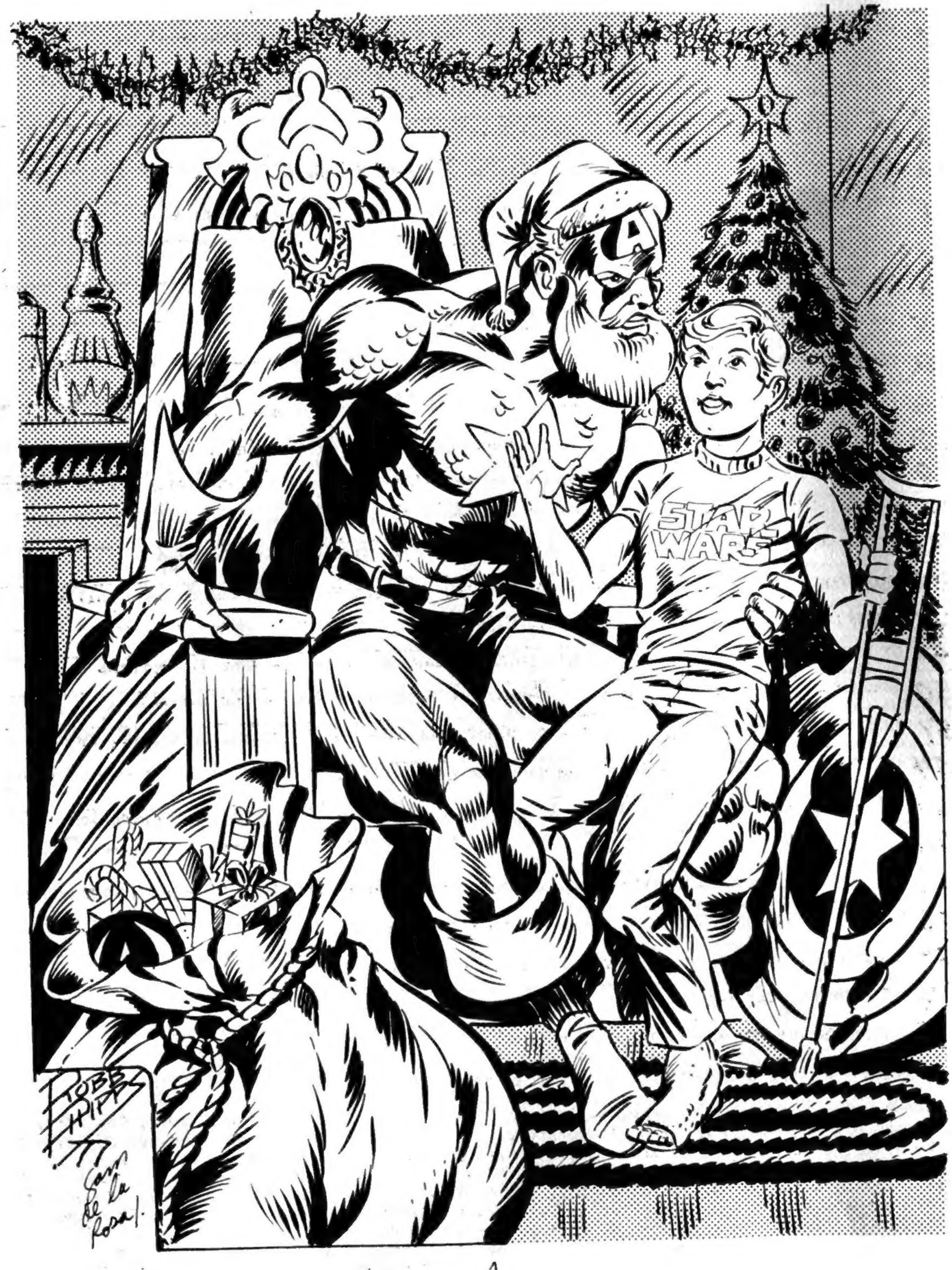
("Welcome one and all to the sequel of AFTA 1, otherwise and further to be known as AFTA 2. This is the special Christmas issue (I figured, hell, why wait! We may all be dead by Christmas!)-- Merry Christmas to you! I will be making these annoying introductions every so often, trying to sound like Harlan Ellison, but probably coming off more like Bob Rozakis. Lots of things are happening thish, like Mr. Clavell Spim, the RAISIN KING, offers to help out with AFTA, and instead tries to establish a fascist power base by trying to seize control of AFTA. I'm alive now (a step up slightly from last issue), except I have been cloned (and an experimental error has left me without a backbone). Dale is dead from oversex, before his trial, and I've even decided to run a table of contents page... I've loaded the gun full up (what the ammunition is like, I don't know, it could be blanks), so let's shoot! Sit back and enjoy, enjoy..." --Bill-Dale)



F. P. SENSATIONALISM'S

THE DEATH OF LOTS OF OTHER PEOPLE, NO, REALLY!

Last issue, Dale Marcinko chronicled the death of his identical twin brother, Bill.

Bill ran a red light in New Brunswick, NJ on Dec. 5, 1976, and was hit broadside by an armored Nazi tank. "It vas not mine fault," driver Herr Riechstag said, "I vas just on mine vay to Polant, and dis Amerikaner pig runs a red light." The official cause of death was listed as "stupidity."

No one suspected anything. Except me, of course.

You see, I'm F.P. Sensationalism, crack reporter for the National Fart ("we don't give you any hot air"), and I suspect everything. Where there's money and a crime involved, bet your bottom dollar, there's a conspiracy and a cover-up.

Well, back in Feb. 1978 (a full 3 months before anything happened) in these pages of AFTA, I put forth my SECOND CAR THEORY, the story of Jerry Slick, professional car assassin and former homosexual "drag" queen. I even tried to reveal the name of the person who commissioned him to kill Bill. But I was stopped there. People laughed, they said, ha ha, who can believe a story about a 1974 Mazda flying out of a Texas Book Depository window? But they aren't laughing now.

Now, when all the major witnesses are dead, now, when the culprit who resisted arrest is dead, now, when the only witness alive, Herr Reichstag, is now living in Argentina (after the shooting death of Cliff Meth), NOW, when I have all the paperback and movie rights to this story, have people stopped laughing.

You want to know what happened? Here it is:

Unknown to the police and even the staff of the New York Times, there were 30 witnesses to the accident that night in New Brunswick. Yes, THIRTY! I, being the crack journalist that I am, rushed to interview the witnesses, hoping Tom Snyder hadn't had them on his show already with paper bags on their heads or something. But after I had attempted to contact the first 17 witnesses, I became suspicious. All 17 had died of mysterious and somewhat humorous deaths in the past year. In a cruel and sensationalistic world, that is notable, but not exceptional.

Number 18 was to be the final nail in the coffin. Mrs. Benigntumor was killed by an "Exploding cat."

I talked to Mr. Benigntumor and their children, Bobo and Dippy, and found that it was not an exploding cat at all (they are quite rare), but a regular cat with a thermonuclear device scotch taped to its tail.

It was time to pay another visit to Dale Marcinko, Bill's vicious twin brother. He was not friendly. Zelda, Bill's wife was correct when she said, "When Dale said he could use a friend, he meant it."

I left but made a mental note to return that night, when Dale would be out having sex or something. I even remembered.

This time he wasn't home. My nose for news figured a minor crime at this point could yield amazing results. So I broke into the Marcinko family home. I found a Jack Kirby cover Dale had stolen for the cover of AFTA #2 ("It'll sell it, even if there's just blank pages inside"). I also found check stubs and sordid love letters from Dale to Jerry Slick, the Mazda Killer. The link was made.

Being an American, I did the right thing. I did not go to the police. I did not confront Dale, or Bill's wife (the former Zelda Clitshitz) with this news. I went straight for the National Fart with a front page banner already composed. The issue hit the stands with my story on May 2, 1978. On May 6, a party of local policemen went out with the intention of taking Dale into custody. They were planning to waive the customary trial, and instead had thoughts of sentencing and executing him in time for the 6 o'clock news. With any luck, they could get a segment on 60 Minutes.

When they got there, they found Dale "entertaining" three young women from the Wharton Save our Children League with a wide assortment of leather goods.

They decided to wait until the cameramen from the local WHAT-tv station arrived.

At 3:00 p.m., May 6, 1978, a vile and bizarre series of events took place. Since they are much too offensive, evil (and valuable to print in a small circulation rag like AFTA), I will intimate only slightly what occured. Dale screamed, "Stay back or I'll blow their brains all over the decorator imitation wood grain paneling." "You don't have a gun," came the reply. "You're right," Dale said. He thought for a bit. "Then I'll sex them to death."

That night there were four new bodies at the Wharton Morgue. One of them bore the tag, Dale Marcinko. The death certificate listed the cause of death as "oversex."

Meanwhile, Zelda Clitshitz had saved her pennies from returning aluminum cans to the Wharton Bar and Recycling Center, and had paid an Australian surgeon, who claimed he could clone human beings, to clone a duplicate of Bill Marcinko. Zelda had saved Bill's body you see in a box behind the refrigerator, since Dale had spent the insurance money on Tequila Sunrise.

The clone was made, and through a process developed by Richard O'Brien (not a doctor) called the "Time Warp", Bill had matured to his same age (for whatever that was ever worth).

On May 24, 1978, Bill Marcinko came home for dinner. He was reborn! Zelda tells us: "He's almost like new. Except for one thing. I wasn't too careful in getting one of his brain cells to Dr. Maltapas, and well, chromosomes being what they are, Bill was born... without...a...backbone. They keep telling me that there are plenty of politicians and religious leaders who function perfectly well without any kind of backbone whatsoever, but I'm worried. You see, Bill's let this Mr. Clavell Spim characters who calls himself "The Raisin King" to co-edit AFTA #2. I don't like Spim. He's very, you know, pithy."

"Pitty?"

"No, pithy. A lot of pith."

A sad note, here. One of Bill's close friends, Cliff Meth (ed of FANTASMA and all around Jew Boy) was a tangential victim of this all. On June 24, 1978, he went to Skokie, Illinois to march against the Nazis. Herr Reichstag, complete with tank, was there. No one had told either of them that the march was moved to Chicago. Herr Reichstag had shot a blind man's dog, and Cliff was outraged. So he shot Cliff, then ran him over with the tank.

Turnabout fair play, it seems. Bill, dead last issue, is alive. Dale, alive last issue, is now dead. Clavell Spim will co-edit this issue.

What of Zelda? What of Bill's fiancee Emma Counterculture? And what of the Nazis? Stay tuned.

THE RAISIN RULES!!

Get out of my article, Spim, I'll have to pay you.

julie's roots

as a fan

back when it all began

by daryl herrick

JULIUS SCHWARTZ

1931 - 1944

by daryl herrick

("We lead off this issue with Daryl's article and interview on Julie Schwartz's beginnings as an sf fan and pulp agent. For those of you who haven't read comics in the last 30 years, Julie is a long time DC editor who was instrumental (through the letter pages of the comics he edited) in the coalescence of comics fandom in the early 60's and the editor of thousands of pages of the most significant and popular comics series today. In fact, Julie has just recently resigned as editor of THE FLASH, after 22 years.")
--B.D.

When the top science fiction magazines were Amazing, Astounding, Wonder and even Argosy, Julie Schwartz played an important part behind the scenes.

Fate dealt Julius Schwartz a strange hand in 1931. He had just met the minimum age requirement of 16 years and was off to a Scienceers meeting at Mortimer Weisinger's house. The Scienceers were a New York City based group of science fiction fans who received publicity in some science fiction magazines and even had the events of their weekly meetings reported in the New York World. Schwartz never did join the Scienceers; they disbanded just before he arrived, but he did meet Mort Weisinger.

The two soon became good friends and sf experts. "We considered ourselves two of the foremost experts on science fiction in 1931,[1]" says Schwartz. They put their knowledge to good use.

They teamed together with Allen Glasser and Forrest J. Ackerman to form the editorial staff of a fan magazine. This publication is the legendary Time Traveller, and is generally acknowledged to be the first sf fan magazine. Previously there had been amateur press associations (APAs) which printed some fiction which could be classified as science fiction and fantasy and small press reprints of dime novels with scientific fiction (i.e. Frank Reade, Jr.) but this is the first publication solely devoted to the study of science fiction.

The editorial in the premiere issue of the Time Traveller sums up their policy:

> In view of this wide current popularity of Science Fiction, it was deemed advisable to launch a magazine treating all the varied phases of the subject and appealing to the interest of its many devotees. And so came into being THE TIME TRAVELLER--the first and only Science Fiction fan magazine. We hope you enjoy it.[2]

The first issue also had a variety of other things. For example, there was an article on Scientifilms by Ackerman and "A Day at Weird Tales" by Jack Darrow. Weisinger began "The History of Science-Fiction," and Schwartz started his "Science-Fiction Question and Answer Department." Throughout this issue were little trivial facts. (Did you know that the then President Hoover was a science fiction fan?)

In the third issue, The Time Traveller was no longer printed on John Zumback's Mimeograph machine, but fellow fan Conrad H. Ruppert produced it on his typeset printing press. The quality of the material was improving as quickly as the quality of the printing. There were good articles, indices, fresh news, and accurate biographical pieces on sf authors.

Even the editorial staff tried their hands at science fiction writing. Under the name Solar Publications, Ruppert produced a booklet with Allen Glasser's "Cavemen of Venus" and later one with Weisinger's "The Price of Peace." Weisinger's story soon afterwards appeared in Amazing Stories Nov. 1932, while Glasser had another story, "Across the Ages," in Amazing Stories Sept. 1932. That's what killed the Time Traveller.

It seems "Across the Ages" bears a remarkable resemblance to a story by Marion Ryan and Robert Ord appearing in the April 1929 Munsey's titled "The Heat Wave." The resemblance was so remarkable it would be euphemistic to call it plagerism. Schwartz and friends hastily left The Time Traveller.

The last issue of The Time Traveller was the eighth. Although they did not have anything to do with it, Weisinger and Schwartz are listed as contributing editors. There is a notice stating that starting next issue, The Time Traveller would be released quarterly with a new format and colour cover. Instead it was incorporated into the Science Fiction Digest.

When Schwartz, Weisinger, Ruppert, and Ackerman left The Time Traveller, they added Maurice Ingher and pooled together $25.00 each to produce the Science Fiction Digest. The second issue incorporated the TIME TRAVELLER sans Glasser. Soon it changed its name to Fantasy Magazine.

It's history is prestigious. It published the two famous round robin stories--"Cosmo" by A. Merritt, E.E. Smith, John Campbell, Ralph Milne Farley, Otis Adelbert Kline, David H. Keller, Edmond Hamilton, Raymond A. Palmer, Arthur J. Burks, Eando BInder, P. Schuyler Miller, Francis Flagg, Bob Olsen, L.A. Eshach, Abner J. Gelula, J. Harvey Haggard, E. Hoffman Price, and Rae Winters (a Palmer pseudonym) and "Challenge From Beyond" by C.L. Moore, A. Merritt, H.P. Lovecraft, Frank B. Long, and Robert E. Howard. Forrest Ackerman and Catherine L. Moore debuted with "Nymph of Darkness" in a 1934 issue. This was reprinted in Weird Tales 1939. Many of the other contributors to Fantasy Magazine sold science fiction professionally but are little remembered today. Among their numbers are David R. Damels, J. Francis Hatch, and Duane Weldon Rimel.

Julie Schwartz and Mort Weisinger were not to remain the top science fiction fans, but they soon became the top sf sales agents. Through their fan activities, the two met many of the science fiction authors and decided to use these connections. In 1934, they formed the Solar Sales Service.

JULIE SCHWARTZ 1931-1944 (cont'd)

Weisinger got an editorial position at the Thrilling/Standard pulp publishing house in 1936 and sold his interests in the agency to Schwartz.

In a letter to science fiction author Will Jenkins who is better known as Murray Leinster, Schwartz tells about the agency. "In view of this favorable situation, we are pleased to announce the formation of Solar Sales Service, an agency for all s-f writers, of which Schwartz & Weisinger are the sole executives.[3]" Then he continues with:

> Moreover, we send out market tips to clients every two weeks or so, keeping them in direct touch with the actual needs of the various publications using science fiction. Most of this information is exceedingly informative and helpful. It saves the author excess postage on stories that can never be sold. For example, the editor of Thrilling Adventures wants all s-f stories sent him TOLD IN THE FIRST PERSON, which is a handy thing to know. There are many other invaluable tips that our service will familiarize you with.[4]

A listing of Solar Sales Service's clients reads like a "Who's Who in Science Fiction" during the 1930s. Among the many are Eando Binder, Henery Haggerd, Ralph M. Finley, David Keller, Henry Hasse, Ray Bradbury, Henry Kuttner, Robert Bloch, Edmond Hamilton, Stanley Weinbaum, John Broone, Manly Wade Wellman, Leigh Brackett, Robert Moore Williams, Alfred Bester, and H.P. Lovecraft. Although Schwartz agented only one story of Lovecraft's, the Old Gent remembered Schwartz and wrote a passage about him in the spoof "The Battle That Ended The Century,"

> Mr. J. Caesar Warts (Schwartz) frequently interviewed both battlers and all the more important spectators; obtaining as souvenirs (after a spirited struggle with Effjay ((Forest J. Ackerman))) an autographed quarterrib of Two-Gun's (Robert E. Howard,) in excellent state of preservation and three finger-nails from the Wild Wolf (Bernard Austin Dwyer.)[5]

Ray Bradbury provided a different description of Schwartz:

> From then on I wrote a story a week, starting on Monday and finishing on Saturday and putting the story into the mail every Saturday night so as to start a new story the next Monday. Late each week, a brief postcard would come back with some terse comment from Julie: "Well done, I'm shooting this straight over to May Gneadinger," or "This goes to Weird Tales tomorrow." On one occasion, God help us: "this reads like a fag Martian story. Don't do that again![6]

In 1944, Schwartz put his science fiction activities behind him and became an editor at All-American Comics which later merged into DC Comics. He had by age 29 produced the first science fiction fan magazine, then went on to edit probably the best fan magazine with Fantasy Magazine, and later the top science fiction agent.

Schwartz proved to be an exceptional talent with comic books, too. In those early days, he brought many pulp writers into the comic books with Henry Kuttner, Alfred Bester, Manly Wade Wellman, Edmond Hamilton, Otto Binder, John Broone, Joseph Samachson, and Walter B. Gibson. Today he edits the two most popular comic book characters in the world--Superman and the Batman.

As for the others, Mort Weisinger, after years of editing Superman comic books has become one of the top free lance writers in America. (I regret reporting that Mort passed away on May 7, 1978, of a heart attack, at the age of 63. With over 30 years at DC, his contribution to DC, by sheer quality alone, cannot be underestimated) Forest J. Ackerman is what is best described as a professional science fiction fan. There was an Allen Glasser who wrote verse for science fiction magazines in the 1950s, last appearing in a Sept. 1957 issue of Other World Science Fiction.

FOOTNOTES

1. Guy H. Lillian III "Strange Schwartz Stories" Amazing World of DC Comics #3 (New York, National Periodical Publications, Inc. 1974), p. 3.
2. Unsigned (Allen Glasser?) The Time Traveller, Vol. 1, No. 1, January 1932.
3. Letter from Julius Schwartz to Will Jenkins June 7, 1934.
4. Ibid.
5. H.P. Lovecraft "The Battle That Ended The Century," The Last Celt, Glen Lord, Ed. (New York, Berkeley Publishing Corp. 1976) p. 360.
6. "Strange Schwartz Stories," p. 6.

JULIUS SCWARTZ A CONVERSATION

While travelling to Syracuse from Boston via New York City, I hastily arranged a visit with Mr. Schwartz at the DC Comics offices. I came at a very busy time and had to limit my stay to under a half hour. For this reason, my questions jumped from one topic to another. The transcript has been rearranged and some questions reworded for the reader's convenience. Anything Mr. Schwartz has said has not been changed.
--Daryl.

AFTA: It has been hinted you left The Time Traveller because Allen Glasser plagerized a story.

SCHWARTZ: The exact...Where did you get this information? Moskowitz or someone?

AFTA: Moskowitz. In the Immortal Storm.

SCHWARTZ: The exact story is I picked up a copy of Argosy or one of the Munsey publications. There was a story called "The Heat Wave." I read it and saw to my astonishment it was word for word the same as a story Glasser sold to Amazing Stories called "Across the Ages." Changed the title. I didn't check word for word, but I know the last line of the story went something like this: "I awoke with horror in my eyes," and Glasser put in the word "dawning" before horror. That's the changes. It was an out and out plagerism. It was piracy. Piracy means a word for word swipe. It was never publicly stated. I knew about it, and Mort Weisinger who was my best friend at the time found out about it and said we better disassociate ourselves with this Glasser. We said we no longer had anything to do with The Time Traveller, so Glasser put out one more additional copy of The Time Traveller--maybe number seven as I recall. (Actually it was the eighth-- DSH) Mort and I went over with Carny Ruppert, and we started the Science Fiction Digest. Allen Glasser was only the editor of The Time Traveller because Mort and I were very young. We were only sixtenn years old and didn't have any faith in our ability. Glasser pretended he had a certain literary quality which we found out wasn't true, so we asked him to be editor. Actually Mort and I conceived the idea, organized, and so on and so on.

AFTA: I believe you and Weisinger were listed as contributing editors on the last issue.

SCHWARTZ: We had nothing to do with it. We didn't even know it was coming out.

AFTA: You met Weisinger through the Scienceers who broke up at the first meeting you attended.

SCHWARTZ: Yes.

AFTA: But in the Amazing World of DC Comics, it has a photograph of the Scienceers in 1935--four years after the breaking up of the group.

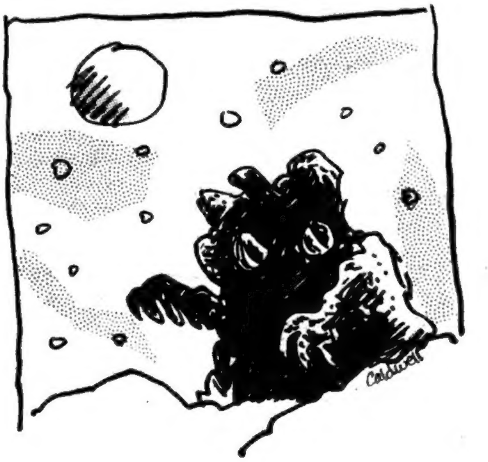
SCHWARTZ: Wrong year. That was the wrong year.

AFTA: At one time, Weisinger received free ad space in Author and Journalist...

SCHWARTZ: Possibly for an article or something. Possibly.

AFTA: To fill this space, the two of you created the Solar Sales Service.

SCHWARTZ: I don't recall that at all. All I know is Mort and I said, look we have all these "ins" with writers and artists, of course, through the fan magazine, and we knew them personally. Why don't we... (We are interrupted by a phone call -- DSH) So we contacted many of our writers who were friends and so forth and so on and said, look give us your stories because if you send it to Amazing it bounces; they send it back to you; you send it to Wonder and so forth and so on. We will do all the agenting for you. We will give you any tips. We are in contact with the editors. If an editor wants an interplanetary story; if he wants a 6000 word story, and so forth and so on. That's how it started. Shortly thereafter, Mort got a job at Thrilling/Standard, so he had to disassociate himself with the agency, and I took it over.



AFTA: Was Ruppert putting out any other publication besides the Science Fiction Digest?

SCHWARTZ: Oh, yes. He put out the Dragon Glass by Merritt. He put out The Woman in the Woods by A. Merritt. I think that was as a Christmas card or something. I think he may have put out something by Seabury Quinn--I'm not sure.

And of course the Weinbaum book--the memorial one. When Weinbaum died, I put a collection of his best stories in a book, and he printed it. There was a very limited run, and there was an introduction by Ray Palmer which told how Stan Weinbaum and his wife Marge got together. It was very romantic, but she objected to it as being too personal. That introduction was taken out and substituted by another one by Lawrence Keating.

AFTA: In the Amazing World of DC Comics, it is stated you agented both H.P. Lovecraft stories "The Shadow Out of Time," and "At the Mountains of Madness." Elsewhere it has been stated you only agented "At the Mountains of Madness."

SCHWARTZ: All I know is I got paid for it. That's to the best of my recollection. I know I sold "Mountains of Madness" because Lovecraft gave it to me. (Mr. Schwartz later acknowledged he was mistaken. He only agented "At the Mountains of Madness" and not "The Shadow Out of Time" -- DSH)

AFTA: What was your impression of Lovecraft?

SCHWARTZ: He was basically shy, not very talkative.

AFTA: Where did you meet him?

SCHWARTZ: As I recall, we were at Donald Wandrei's house. They use to have these Lovecraft writers get-togethers every once in awhile. I was there for some reason or other. I guess I knew Donald Wandei, or Otis Kline, Henry Kuttner, whoever was there at the time. I have no recollection whatsoever. I know we did talk about manuscripts, and I said I believe if you (Lovecraft - DSH) had a manuscript, I could sell it to Tremaine of Astounding because he has been talking about you. That's how I got a hold of "At the Mountains of Madness." As for the other one, I don't recall how I got it. I vaguely remember the check was for three hundred-fifty dollars.

I was in correspondence with Lovecraft. He wrote me one of his famous postcards. He had six, seven hundred words on that. Unfortunately, I don't have any left. But he was a very interested reader of my fan magazine. He thought Weinbaum was an exceptional talent. When the first Weinbaum came out, he just raved about it.

AFTA: Did you try to agent a British collection of Lovecraft's stories?

SCHWARTZ: No, not true. Never ever knew there was such a thing. (Here we are interrupted by another telephone call. The conversation resumes by discussing pulp research in general)

You came to me and interviewed me. You got the true story, but The Immortal Storm is all based on hearsay or material printed in the fan magazines and so forth and so on. Second hand, third hand material. That is not the way you gather material.

AFTA: In Frank Gruber's Pulp Jungle, he tells a tale of Weisinger and you challenging him to identify science fiction author J. Hamilton Edwards...

SCHWARTZ: J. Hamilton Edwards? I don't even know who J. Hamilton Edwards is.

But we did challenge Arthur J. Burks who called himself the king of the pulps. He said he could write a story around anything. He said get a dictionary, pick out a word, and I will write a story around it. And Mort or I went to the dictionary and hit the word fan. He wrote a story called "Slaves of the Fan."

AFTA: What type of writers did you agent?

SCHWARTZ: I agented what I call professional writers. I didn't take on... (Another interruption - DSH) Many agents would advertise in the magazines saying send us your manuscripts, and we charge you five dollars per 1,000 words for a reading fee. I only took on professionals who had already sold.

AFTA: You agented the Captain Future stories for Edmond Hamilton.

SCHWARTZ: I did, but it wasn't directly. I think I got him the first "in" on it. And he would give me an agency fee even though I didn't submit stories for him. He felt because I broke the ice or broke the ground that he would give me a fee. I'm not even sure it continued for all the Captain Future stories. It might have been for the first few.

ULIUS SCHWARTZ - A CONVERSATION (continued)

FTA: Did any of the other agents handle pulp hero stories?

CHWARTZ: I would not know about it, it is a practice in the movies, I understand, whatever money you get you pay the agent whether the agent directly gets you the job or not. He is your agent, and it is customary to give ten per cent of whatever you do.

FTA: With all this involvement in science fiction, you wrote very little.

CHWARTZ: I wrote one story which I was aspired to do when I interviewed Henry Steven Keller who was a well-known mystery writer in the 30s, and he was an editor of a magazine called Ten Stories. He printed a lot of science fiction. He printed Doctor Keller stories under a pen name. Outside of that, I have done a couple comic scripts.

Sam de la Rosa!
IF

THE RAISIN. BY CLAVELL SPIM

The raisin has had a bad time these days. People laugh at it, like they do at prunes. But prunes are funny!! Raisins are serious business. Do you know that raisins not only cure cancer, and improve your sex drive, but make you live forever? I bet not.

Raisins are 'nature's candy.' They are compact. You can tuck a few away in the crevices and orafices of your body (belly button, between toes, behind elbows, and you, gals, in your [redacted]), and then, when you're hungry, THERE THEY ARE. How many Big Macs can you stick up your nostril. Not many. With raisins, you can get a good two dozen up your snozz if you try hard.

But you can't tell people that, they don't believe you. Apathy is rampant these days, and the raisin suffers most of all.

Young teenagers throw them at the audience off of movie theater balconies and scream out "WATCH OUT, FLYING CENTIPEDES!!!" terrifying the patrons and causing riots.

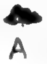
Raisins are my life. So I'm dedicating my editorial pages in AFTA in an attempt to ~~fill you full of raisin propaganda~~ educate you in the usefulness of the raisin.

As a public service, I will be printing THINGS WHICH YOU COULD MISTAKE RAISINS FOR IF YOU AREN'T CAREFUL. This is a major problem.

In general, I will try to ~~take over AFTA from Bill because the stupid ass has no backbone anyway~~ inform you and raise your social consciences to what I believe is a fundamental concern in society today.

Raisinly,
Mr. Clavell Spim
'THE RAISIN KING'

THINGS WHICH YOU COULD MISTAKE FOR RAISINS IF YOU AREN'T CAREFUL

→ 

NO. 1 – A PIECE OF DIRT

George Perez = Part 2

("Here is Part Two of The George Perez Interview conducted by Mike Higgins." --Bill-Dale)

AFTA: Do you feel that your style is hindered or restricted by working in comics, for example, by editors, the company itself or the 17 page story length?

PEREZ: As far as style, there is a certain restriction, particularly working at Marvel. Considering their sales track record, you can't deny them that. You have to draw the way they want it.

A lot of people complain that they don't give you enough artistic freedom to be your own artist. I talked to Johnny Romita one time when he was trying to tell me the errors of my ways. Although I was a decent artist, commercially it would not go, and in working in a team effort with an inker it would not work. I'll explain that later.

Now, if you were to suddenly take over the strip DICK TRACY and you not draw him like Chester Gould, despite what you thought of Chester Gould's style, there are going to be fans who resent it. Fans will not recognize the character and thus the sales will go down. Little Orphan Annie was a classic example. When Harold Gray died they had an artist similar to Gray, then they had an artist who was radically different from Gray. The strip died. It was no longer popular. It was no longer Little Orphan Annie.

In comics, I guess Neal Adams is the most radical from the majority of the Marvel Comics artists. When he did THE AVENGERS it didn't sell all that well. It sold reasonably well. He did have the disadvantage of being there when comics were raised to 25¢, and kids were a little more reluctant to buy it anyway, but Sta Lee didn't particularly care for Neal's work, because Neal does not compromise. Neal is an exceptional artist, and he can draw Marvel type faces-- If he wants to. He does things like that for the Peter Pan records. He draws them closer to the actual concepts-- the way they've been drawn for years. But, basically, The Avengers were Neal Adams people dressed up in Avengers outfits. He did not pay particular attention to Thor or Captain America-- Iron Man has an iron mask so that was no trouble. They didn't really look like the characters. They looked fantastic, they were well drawn, but they didn't look like the characters. Thor didn't look like Thor. If you look at Thor drawn in THE AVENGERS, inked by Palmer, compared to Thor drawn by Adams and inked by Sinnott in THOR, Joe altered it enough to give it the look it needed, though it still looked very much like Adams. Reactions were a little mized sometimes on that book, because, again, Neal's Thor wasn't Thor as everybody knows Thor. Since the majority of the buying public is young fans, they want to be easily able to recognize their heroes.

At DC there may be exceptional cases. Batman was altered-- In fact, Neal totally redrew Batman, until he became the mysterious character again, but Neal couldn't do that with Superman. Neal had his interpretation of Superman but it isn't that far removed from the way Curt Swan draws him or Kurt Schaffenberger draws him.

They wouldn't give someone with a radical style-- like Keith Giffen, a new artist-- Superman to draw. His artwork on the DEFENDERS received mixed reviews. His style was so radical, especially when you're dealing with an established character like the Hulk. Hulk has certainly had a wide gamut of different artists, but still he had to follow some kind of restricted byline on it.

That's probably why Jose Garcia Lopez, who I think is one of the best artists they have there, doesn't receive very much recognition. The reason-- he's mostly drawing Superman. And Superman looks the same all the time. If they gave him a different strip where he could exercise himself, even though he'd still draw in the same style-- the fact that you'd be seeing it on a totally different character would make a great difference. Superman is drawn the same way anyway and he doesn't draw attention.

If John Buscema had started drawing Superman he would not be as well known, because he draws similar to Curt Swan, albeit a bit more robust. Superman is not a character who attracts artists of different styles. He has been set in a certain way.

The same thing with the Fantastic Four, although Marvel has a greater proficiency for rock-em, sock-em story-telling-- exagerated storytelling. It makes a difference there.

And Superman's been around a lot longer than the FF, and basically has been unchanged except for the major changes from Schuster to Boring, from Boring to Swan.

One thing I mentioned before--If you want to work in a team, particularly working with an inker, there are certain things you have to adjust to. It seems like a small trivial matter, but drawing noses can destroy you. I drew noses from what I saw in the finished product-- from what I've seen by Neal Adams or Tom Palmer or anyone inked by Klaus Janson or Dick Giordano. I put shadows instead of actually drawing noses. If you draw a dark shadow rather than the actual outline of the nose-- and you don't get a capable inker, he's going to interpret that as mud and he's gonna put a little black spot and make it look like a dot on the person's face or a smudge.

If you draw a clean nose, basically a Kirby/Sinnott nose, any inker can do that. Even if you get the worst inker, all he has to do is follow it and has it right. Get an inker like Klaus Janson or Tom Palmer, they can enhance it because they have the basic skeleton to work from. If you want to work in a team of artist, inker, and colorist, you have to be able to adjust to certain things-- like drawing things simply. That's why Kirby's always so popular. His artwork is so simple anyone can follow it and the young audience can always tell what's going on. And colorists always like Kirby. Even in his most complex work, everything is divided so you can follow it. He's very good with interlocking adjacent lines. If he has an arm going one way, the lines in the background go the opposite way. You can easily define everything.

There are things like that than an artist should know.

The 17 page length is a ball buster to say the least. I have often had trouble trying to get my stories into a 17 page format. 18 pages was tight enough. 20 was ideal. I guess I can say it more than others because I do group books. I was doing group books for the longest time. It's incredibly hard to do justice when you have a book like THE INHUMANS or THE AVENGERS, which literally has a cast of thousands. To be able to have other characters stand out and get it all in 17 pages is hard-- and still have the mandatory fight scenes.

AFTA: When a story runs for two issues, can you plot it more easily over 34 pages, rather than individual 17 page stories?

PEREZ: No, usually we plot it issue for issue, because we have to decide where one's going to start and one's going to end. In order for a book like that to go well, even in a continued story, every individual chapter has to stand on its own-- its own introduction, story and denouement, even if it carries over into the next issue's introcution. It should have all the elements of a good, self-enclosed story. Obviously, that gets tough.

Like the current issues of the AVENGERS. It has a storyline that's going to extend for twelve issues, but it has a fight scene between the Beast and Charlie from The Guardians of the Galaxy. ("This interview was conducted in August, 1977." --B.D.) It also has a fight scene on Earth which does reach a conclusion. There's a touch of mystery left in both fight scenes that leads up to something else, but we've taken care of that primary chapter of the story. That's the toughest thing, but is is necessary because if people jump in in the middle of the story, they can't help but be totally confused. If they can't get the back issues, they're not going to care about getting the future issues. It's a problem if people don't do it correctly-- we follow certain formulas.

But, artistically, do I feel limited? I've adapted. I feel I have as much freedom as I need, and I'm pleasing Marvel, I'm pleasing me, and as far as I can see, I'm pleasing the fans. Some artists complain they don't have enough freedom, but it's worked for me. I've been able to adapt and still enjoy my style immensely.

And, I have one of the best sales records at Marvel right now. All the books I've ever done have gone up in sales. I have nothing to complain about there. Marvel, as far as what they told me, has helped me. They were right. If I didn't listen, I probably wouldn't sell as well.

AFTA: You were talking about inking before. Do you have any interest in inking your own work, or even inking over another artist's pencils?

PEREZ: If I were to start inking, I'd probably prefer inking someone else. I would try someone with a fairly simple pencilling style, like Sal Buscema-- Gil Kane, even, although Gil Kane doesn't allow for as much freedom. I would prefer inking someone else, because when I ink myself, well, for one thing I'm a lousy inker right now-- I would never try it now, but if I learn to ink, inking myself would be a chore at times. Sure, you know that none of your lines will be misinterpreted, but you feel like you're doing the same work twice. If I don't do full pencils I'll have a hard time inking myself, but if I go back with ink I'm really doing the same work twice. Many pencillers have mastered the ability to do only breakdowns and finish it with their ink. I don't think I could do that.

And, if I inked, I don't think I'd ink on any regular professional basis. I can earn more money pencilling and I can do it a hell of a lot faster.

AFTA: Are you at all interested in writing your own comics?

PEREZ: Oh yeah. I don't know if I'd write for Marvel. Maybe if a certain story hit me, then I'd try writing it, but I don't hink I'd do it regularly as a series. I'd like to write my own stories, related to comics, outside the field. I plan to do an outside project-- a 150 page hardcover of a story I'll pencil and write. I've plotted it, I haven't written it yet. That I'd like to try.

AFTA: Do you have any desire to work for another comic company?

PEREZ: Well, Marvel has been good to me, and I'm a loyalist from way back. I think I'll stay there...unless the company goes bankrupt, which I can't see in the forseeable future.

As far as working for any other company--I wouldn't want to work for Warren. I don't particularly care for that company. As far as DC, the only thing that sometimes cajoles me to THINK about going to DC are two books-- from my track record, people can figure out what the two books are-- The Legion of S^{U}perheroes and particularly the Justice League. Because I don't work at another company, I regret that I wont do those books. But I don't like their management either. Also I tried out for that company six times and did not get accepted. I figure, Marvel gave me the chance when I needed it, they've been very good to me, they provided me with the help

I needed, and they provided me with hospital coverage when I was only freelance and I suffered from some nerve paralysis which I could not understand. I found their coverage a little strange since I wasn't even staff. When I had trouble with my quota, they cut it down-- they gave me no trouble whatsoever. They make me seem lik I belong there and I love working at that company for that reason.

And I guess I'm one of the few new artists who really gets along with Stan. Stan, I find, is an amiable person. Okay, he's a braggart at times-- hell, he's go a lot to be a braggart about. He deserves his moment of basting in glory, as long a he doesn't take advantage of it-- that's true with anybody.

AFTA: Have you had much contact with Stan?

PEREZ: Actually, very limited. Most don't have much contact with Stan-- You bump into him a couple of times. The first time I ever met him, which was one of my greatest moments, was after my first issue of the FF had come out. Sol Brodsky's secretary came to me and told me Sol was looking for me. I thought something was wrong. Mayb they were having a cutback and they were going to have to let me go. That's the type of feeling I had. So I went to Sol's office. Sol was all smiles, so it was either good news or he was sadistic. He said that Stan wanted to see me. He saw my FF and wanted to meet the artist on it. Sol took me up there. Stan shook my hand and said he was incredibly impressed with the FF. When he saw it he thought it coul be John Buscema or John Romita or some other artist.

AFTA: Had he ever heard of you before?

PEREZ: No, he'd never seen any of my early stuff. He was very impressed, he asked me what I was doing. At the time I was doing the FF, AVENGERS, SONS OF THE TIGER and THE INHUMANS. He knew I wasn't short of work. He made it clear that as long as I wante to work there, I'd have all the work I'd ever possibly need. Which obviously made feel quite good.

Stan has made comments to writers-- he tells Jim Shooter that he loves the artwork on the AVENGERS. One issue in particular that he picked up was my last issue, to date, #162, "The Bride of Ultron!" He loved it.

He also saw issue 8 of THE INHUMANS. He said, "This is terrible, what is it? All those small panels!" Jim told him it was the same artist he said was great on THE AVENGERS. That was the trouble I had with Doug Moench. He overcrowds the story so I had to overcrowd the art. Despite the fact that I like THE INHUMANS, I was never happy with the strip. I didn't have enough freedom and everything was jam-packed. In fact,the first two issues were supposed to fit into 30 pages of a GIANT SIZE. As it turned out it was 38 pages-- 8 pages over.

The third and fourth issue, according to Doug's plot, was supposed to be one issue, and still it was crowded. I had a lot of trouble working with Doug.

AFTA: How does one get your original artwork without buying it from a dealer?

PEREZ: I have an agent who handles it, ordinarily I don't handle my original artwork mostly through lack of time, but the name of the one who does is Steven Diamant, 23 Scott Lane, Englishtown, NJ 07726, phone number (201) 431-0772.

AFTA: What are some of your interests outside of comics?

PEREZ: Well, I'm a big movie buff. I have books on movies and movie trivia, television and television trivia.

I like filming. I haven't done much of it but I'm interested in doing some film work on an amateur basis-- doing stories which I would write, and because of my story-telling experience in comics, I'll be able to direct because I can judge angles and stuff.

Writing I would like to get into. In high school I did a novelette called the TERROR TRAIN that I'd to expand for print as a straight novel, with maybe one or two illustrations. If Omnibus does well, I'll have it printed under that banner-- With a few illustrations, because people will see George Perez and say "He's an artist. Why are we going to buy a book that he wrote?" So there'd be some artwork there.

Those are the basic things.

Another thing I'd like to do is lose weight. I've been on a diet now for a couple of days and I've been exercising like a madman-- pumping iron, as it were-- pumping flab, in my case. But I'll get to it.

AFTA: Do you have any thoughts on fandom in general, and do you think there's any value to fanzines?

PEREZ: As far as fandom is concerned, I've found them the most inspiring group I could have for an audience, and I appreciate the attention I get from them. Asin any fandom of any profession, there are those who take advantage and expect more than they should, which is absolutely normal for any professional. All in all, this art business is a demanding job, and sometimes a fan is not fully aware of that and expects the artist to bend over backward, some respect for a fan is due, but some respect for a professional is due, and as long as it stays within bounds, it's fine. I've got many friends when I first met them, who were just fans and became close friends later. Some I liked having a relationship with. And like in any group, there are those who become too pushy, and have to be told as much to keep a balance.

PEREZ: Normally a fan/artist relationship I find quite valuable, I find it allows for an artist to get an idea, not a total idea because a fan is in the minority, in terms of buying public, in what the fan expects from the artist as far as output, if he appreciates the artist, if he feels the artist is not doing his job, for whatever reason. If it is an intelligent criticism, I will listen to it. If it is a criticism by someone who does not know what he's doing, at least I let him get his word in-- sometimes a non-professional opinion can mean just as much. But then I consider that I know more than he does. I enjoy fans immensely. I have to have an audience to get applause from.

AFTA: How about fanzines?

PEREZ: Fanzines are the greatest training ground for young talent. I've done stuff in fanzines before I was a pro. It gives you the slight ego trip of seeing something printed, and even if you were not to make it as a professional, and were to make a career out of fanzines, which would not pay that much money, but at least it gets printed-- it allows for an artistic output.

AFTA: How did you get into fandom?

PEREZ: I started comparitively late, compared to some old fans today, judging by the age groups. I got into fandom in 1968, when I was 15 years old.. I had a lot of fandom life at that time, some good pleasure, most of it not. But I did learn a lot from it, and it did get me the knowledge of how to get into the business in a professional capacity, and for that I am grateful to it.

AFTA: Are you glad you did work in fanzines?

PEREZ: For one thing, it got me into the business end of the comics art world, I learned things I never knew before, and I felt would not have learned had I not gone into the fanzine area. I learned whom some of the artists were, and what goes into making a book, the importance of an editor--writer--artist relationship, and the fact that mistakes can be made and oft times were, and how to avoid them later. If the fanzine editor is an intelligent editor or publisher, then the artist or writer working with him should actually learn quite a bit about dealing in a project that is hopefully beneficial to both of them. And that the first person you have to please is the reader, and not himself, it helps to be proud of your work, but you have to cater to someone. That's something a fan would know, but when you go pro or semi-pro, you get that knowledge and it helps you 'cause you don't go in felling your way is right no matter what a person says. It has to be a give and take between production personnel and artistic personnel.

GEORGE PEREZ &
SAM DE LA ROSA

This art (c)
INTERFAN

IF

INTERVIEW WITH GEORGE PEREZ (continued)

AFTA: How does one get noticed by Marvel Comics?

PEREZ: Perseverance. Talent, and a noticeable dedication to produce a product that will please not only the artist involved but the company involved as well. It has to b something that will do both, and it has to be accepted by certain standards. Whe you go into any company, never expect that you're gonna tell them anything they do know, as far as art. Listen to them, and humble yourself first, that is the only way you'll actually be noticed. Cocky people seldom make it all the way through.

AFTA: What do you think of your work on the BEATLES book and the actual finished produc

PEREZ: I thought I did well considering the incredible challenge of trying to do a straig biography for a man whose been used to super-heroes for so long, and make it look exciting, obviously I couldn't have the Beatles delivering punches at anybody, and I'm wuite happy in getting the resemblances down and keeping the flow of the story visually exciting. Dave Kraft did an incredible amount of research on that, in order to get the clothing right, and the look right, and Klaus Janson, also being a Beatles fan who is inking it as accurately as he could, and Tom Palmer did an incredible job of painting the cover based on a sketch of mine which had a montage of the Beatles from their start (with Pete Beck their drummer) to their 1970 split- Dave Kraft spared no expense to make the best that he could, he was a Beatle fan w they came out, and everyone has put more than their best on this, and I'm very hap with the way it turned out. I think we should have comics fans and Beatles fans we pleased with this, and commercially there doesn't seem any way it can fail.

AFTA: What are you doing now?

PEREZ: After I polish off the Avengers Annual and do a two-part Man-Wolf for Marvel Premi tying up all the loose ends from two years ago, I'm working with Ralph Macchio on another two part Marvel Premiere featuring the Black Widow, and I plan to knock mys out, and we plan to treat her the way she was intended, she is almost a female typ James Bond, a femme fetale. I think, if done right, she can be a very exciting cha acter. I thought Gene Colan did a fine Black Widow, and when she was inked by Bil Everett she was a gorgeous Black Widow. And I think if I put my mind to it, I'm gonna try to make her an exotic, exciting character. And other than that, I'm worki for Omnibus Productions that did the Perez portfolio, a 40page story featuring a character called DEATH STAR which has nothing to do with Star Wars, which deals wi a science fiction fantasy concept with a female lead character. Almost like a Red Sonja in outer space... And Mike Higgins (the person conducting the interview) will be inking and lettering the thing, and it will include work by such people as Marc Boas, Fred Bobb, and Jim Craig.

END

("Thank you, George, and as a small token, some information on ORACLE for those interested in ordering. I spoke to Mike Higgins on the phone a few days ago, and although it has been delayed some, it will be out any day now. Get it." --Bill-Dale)

ORACLE tm

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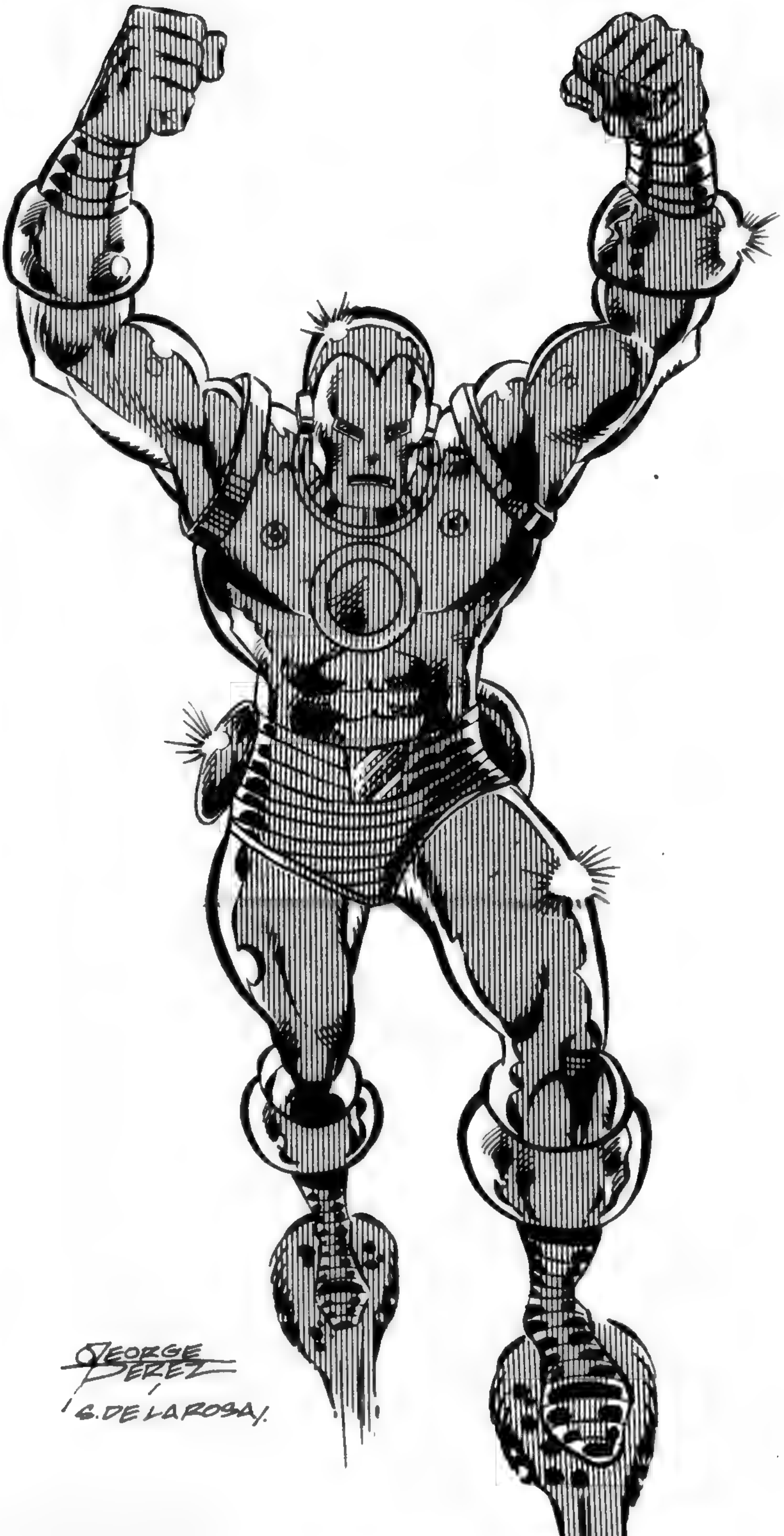

IF

The above art by Perez, as well as the cover of Part One by Kirby, the cover of Part Two by Chaykin, the back cover of Part Two by Mac Patterson, and in truth, an extremely large percentage of the art this issue would not be appearing were it not for the kindness of one Sam de la Rosa, who called me a number of times (from TEXAS) and sent more than enough art for not just this issue,but future issues. I am deeply grateful to Sam in particular.

For you fan editors, INTERFAN is a word that should be in your vocabulary. They supply free art (even specific requests)--spot illos, small sketches, covers, comic strips for all fan editors. The chairman is JIM BERTGES, 1332 Currant Av., Simi Valley, CA 93065. You might also contact SAM DE LA ROSA, 328 Canavan, San Antonio, TX 78221 for art and further info.

Random Samplings

ed via

The best and worst of recent comic books

TOMB OF DRACULA 64

The vampire lord is judged, and punished, by Satan in one of the finest stories that's ever appeared in a horror comic. Under the guidance of the Wolfman/Colan/Palmer team, Dracula learns that he may be a fearsome creature on Earth, but in Hell, he's like a little maggot beside the fallen angel who once challenged the Almighty himself. Satan is effectively portrayed as a huge, monstrous, loathsome entity whose existence is contingent upon the Lord's sufferance. He appears differently to different people, taking on the form of that which they most fear. In this case, his shape is bloated and grotesque and unspeakably foul, as if Dracula's subconscious sees him as the one thing more hideous than himself. Ultimately, the punishment the Devil metes out for Dracula's having brought Janus into existence, thereby threatening his very survival, is a supremely ironic one. For the evil Count is not tortured or slain, he is merely returned to Earth as a normal man. Satan perceives this as the most horrible punishment of all, for Dracula is now as mortal as all those he used to look down upon. And, stripped of his vampiric powers, he is virtually helpless against his clever, determined, resourceful, extremely well-armed pursuers. Once again, Marv Wolfman has turned TOD in a new, exciting direction, one which holds the promise of both a thrilling manhunt and a strange final showdown. Illustrated by Gene Colan and Tom Palmer, whose bleak, cavernous depiction of Hell is terrifying and grim and as utterly empty as a damned soul.

JUSTICE LEAGUE 154

A skull-faced Dr. Destiny tries to kill the JLA using knowledge acquired from tapping the very depths of their subconscious in Gerry Conway's meticulous and extraordinary tale. In manipulating the Heroes' innermost fears, whether it be Superman's fear of accidentally injuring others with his great powers or Batman's fear of becoming dependent on acquired ability, rendering his years of training and study all but useless, Dr. Destiny is robbing them of a private part of their make-ups and using it in his mad murder scheme. Black Canary calls this obscene, but it's also maniascally clever. Like Steve Englehart before him, Conway takes his cue from the JLA stories of Gardner Fox, crafting his narrative around the characters of the individual Leaguers and extricating them from the traps the villain has set for them in a simple manner that does not have to rely on outrageous gimmickry or situations and conditions which are contrived to the point of absurdity. The result is a superb, uplifting tale in which the Heroes overcome their fears and turn the tables on their cruel tormentor, ultimately making him suffer as they have suffered right before he's put down for the long count. Conway has succeeded in three of his four Justice League outings; this riveting tale is his most conspicuous success to date. Drawn by Dick Dillin and Frank McLaughlin, who are at their best when depicting the villain by himself, plotting insanely.

DR STRANGE 28

Mankind's mystic champion fights the alien In-Betweener in a desperate attempt to rectify the situation of Chaos Unbound the inadvertantly brought about by destroying one aspect of the Cosmic Wheel of Change some months ago. This stunning conclusion to the saga of the Creators, scripted by Roger Stern from an outline provided by Jim Starlin, captures all that's good about Dr. Strange, from his iron resolve in the face of overwhelming odds to his deep, abiding love for Mother Earth, whose inhabitants deserve something better than having the world turned topsy-turvy as part of a power play by mystic beings from all ages. The In-Betweener, as a creature of both Order and Chaos who serves only the Cosmic Balance, tries to stop this valiant effort, thereby preventing further upsetting of the Balance. But the Master of the Mystic Arts just isn't buying his contention that reversing the process and making things on Earth normal once more would bring dire consequences. In almost every sense, he symbolizes human courage and righteousness and pride, and, yes, arrogance. He is our representative amongst the Lords of the Higher Worlds, the Sorcerer Supreme who can stand toe-to-toe with the In-Betweener and make him see things his way. And yet, he is quite human despite his almost unimaginable skill with the forces of mysticism. The truly superb artwork is by Tom Sutton, the powerful cover is by Frank Brunner.

BLACK LIGHTNING 9

Tony Isabella's fine anti-terrorist tale is, unfortunately, very timely. His bald, sadistic villain gives a good account of terrorist character in the scene which finds him boasting that he'll kill his hostages even if the authorities accede to his demands, thus paving the way for swift compliance with anything he insists upon getting during future seiges. Lightning is, of course, the one hop

KEITH ROYSTER

RANDOM SAMPLINGS by Ed Via
(continued)

for the group of hostages, which includes his ex-wife. But before he can reach the place where they're being held, he must battle his way through robots who are exact duplicates of the criminal himself and straighten out the friction between him and the police officer who goes part of the way with him. This taut thriller has lots of energy and drive, but it is its unflinchingly perceptive view of terrorists and their subhuman methodology which ismost impressive. The Annihilist embodies the kind of mentality who will get what he wants no matter who has to die, an attitude familiar to anyone who remembers the massacre that took place at the Munich Olympics in 1972 or the horrifying slaughter of innocent Israelis in Tel Aviv on March 11, 1978. About the only thing missing from Tony's chilling story is an apologist for the terrorist, such as the PLO's oafish representative who defended the Tel Aviv atrocity on The Today Show three days after it occured. In an amusing epilogue, Jefferson Pierce's ex-wife asks him who's he trying to kid with his BL secret identity, demonstrating that there's at least one comics writer who is willing to admit the absurdity of a Super-Hero's intimates not knowing him behind his mask and costume. Drawn by Trevor Von Eeden and Vince Colletta.

DAREDEVIL 152

Roger McKenzie's first Daredevil script is a misguided mess which portrays the Man Without Fear as a fumbling foul-up who is incapable of doing anything right except when he's committing a felony. Having DD take a tumble off the buildings over which he usually swings with such magnificent grace may fill up the pages, but that's about all it does. And having him crash right through a window as a means of gaining entry to the home of Debbie Harris may look exciting, but it seems stupid in light of her post-kidnapping paranoia. Of course, his subsequently abducting her again, this time for her own good, works out just fine, but one has the feeling that the only reason everything comes up roses is because the author wrote it that way. Lest anyone think Daredevil is through screwing up for the issue, the last part of the story finds him ambushing Paladin, who's chasing someone whom he believes will lead him to Killgrave, the Purple Man, who, as we know, is the cause of the recent crises in DD's life. The reason given for his jumping Paladin is that he saw a man with a gun running after a man who was seemingly unarmed. Being so far away he wasn't able to recognize Paladin's distinctive costume, he instantly sprang to the aid of the underdog. By that logic, the ought to bushwhack the next cop he sees chasing a mugger; the police have guns but most muggers only carry knives. Drawn by Carmine Infantino and Klaus Janson, whose art is the only thing that holds this dismal story together.

ROYSTER

CARL TAYLOR - S.DELAROSA

MARVEL PREVIEW 13

The aliens are out to get us and pyramid power is our only hope for salvation in David Anthony Kraft's tedious tale about UFOs and the people whose lives they affect. The narrative is overwritten to the point where you have to come up for air after almost every page; virtually all the panels are crammed full of descriptions regarding the pain and suffering of the one man who might squelch the alien plot. His daughter, who is made to suffer every bit as much, comes across as the naive tag-along who doesn't understand what's going on, but who loves Daddy and will stick with him come Hell or high water. Both Hell and high water come at them at one time or another, of course, for the alien presence is everywhere, from garbage cans in a dark alley to an airport Men's Room to the high seas themselves. It cannot be maintained that paranoia is never an effective story-telling device, we have Richard Mathaissen as proof that it often is, but the paranoia Kraft employs is inept and smothering and, for the most part, ineffectual. The art, by Herb Trimpe on pencils and Pablo marcos on inks, is nothing to get worked up about, nor, unfortunately, is the Jim Starlin cover. At thirty-eight pages, the story is not a long one for a black and white magazine, but ten pages

RANDOM SAMPLINGS by Ed Via
(continued)

of this junk is eternity enough. MP #13 is rounded out by articles section that makes much ado about the possibility of aliens visiting Earth, but doesn't really have that much new to say. It fits in perfectly with the rest of the issue.

RED SONJA 9

Roy Thomas, Clare Noto, and Frank Thorne put the Hyrkanian she-devil through her paces once more, but this time the result is pretty bad. The story reads like a misdirected Jirel of Joiry tale, for Sonja is transported to a weird subterranean realm in which she is forced to fight the minions of a sinister sorceress who turns out to be the Mother of her current would-be suitor. What's good for the Lady of Joiry is definitely not good for Red Sonja, especially when the story calls for her to fight a monster who looks the same coming and going and have her fat pulled out of the fire by a magic laoak wielded by the sorceress' son, who's known to cast spell or two himself. The Sonja who walks out on her own feast and then climbs up into a tree waiting for some guy to come along and talk to her bears little resemblance to the hellcat who tempted Conan, then told him off and laughed in his face. This Sonja seems right at home in a listless, unsatisfying narrative in which her courage and valor comes to naught, necessitating the aforementioned last-minute rescue and leaving everyone high and dry in terms of something they can relate to. The previous two chapters of Sonja's adventures among the rebels seeking to put Suumaro on the throne of the walled city of Skranos were delightfully entertaining, but this third installment has very little to recommend it. Unimaginatively illustrated by Frank Thorne.

KARATE KID 14

Seventeen pages of pointless mayhem in which the Thirtieth Century's martial arts wizard teams up with Robin, the Teen Wonder, in an attempt to subdue a crystalized Iris Jacobs, who is one a rampage through Twentieth Century New York. That summary sounds awful, but the story itself is much worse. Karate Kid agonizes over his feeling concerning Iris, which causes one to wonder if Bob Rozakis, who is guilty of scripting this full-blown flop, knows that KK resolved this question once and for all in issue #10. Princess Projectra is his true love, and anything to the contrary has to be regarded as a meaningless continuation of a storyline long since cast aside.

C. TAYLOR
+
S. DELAROSA

C.TAYLOR-DELAROSA

Some attempt is made to move KK furthere away from a martial arts book, and more in the direction of a Super-Hero one, but it'll take more than a guest appearance by Robin and the continuing presence of Major Disaster and The Lord of Time to recapture the quality of that handful of early issue. Drawn by Juan Ortiz and Bruce Patterson, whose artwork isn't bad, but even Neal Adams and Dick Giordano would have been hard put to save this one.

DEVIL DINOSAUR 2

A dinosaur whose mouth is wide open in every single panel in which it appears and Moon-Boy, a young dawn-of-man ape-person who has somehow learned pre-school English, highlight Jack Kirby's latest. This is the perfect book for very small children who want to grow up to be comic artists whose specialt is bad dinosaur comics. Why Kirby, who might very well be the greatest comics illustrator who has yet lived, wants to waste his time on this stuff is a real mystery. A waste of ti and money; the reviewer read his copy without buying it and recommends you do neither.

JACK KIRBY-
King or Commoner?

by
robert
sallion

("I will certainly get points for tackiness, running this article after Jack did the cover of this issue. And so it goes." --Bill-Dale)

In past years, Jack "King" Kirby has been acclaimed as one of the greatest creative talents around. But of late, he as been the target of incredible amounts of criticism in the letter columns of comics. In this analysis of his work, I shall try to ascertain whether this criticism is valid.

art

Kirby's art has been his claim to fame for many a year now. The question we must now ask is whether this acclaim is rightfully deserved.

In terms of art, I believe that Kirby is an anachronism. His panel layout is terrible. This kind of layout was fine in the early 70's when there were anywhere between 20 and 24 story pages. Unfortunately, times change, but Kirby hasn't. There are now only a meager 17 pages a story and Kirby is, unintentionally perhaps, cheating us. Let's look at it in an economic way. Not including the splash page, there are 16 story pages (in Marvel comics); there are, on an average, 6 panels per page. This amounts to 96 panels in the average Marvel comic. Now in most Kirby comics (on an average), you'll find only 4 panels a page; this comes to only

D. HERRING
9-76

JACK KIRBY - KING OR COMMONER? (continued)

by Robert Sallion

64 panels a comic. In other words, you pay the same for a Kirby comic as you do for a regular Marvel comic, but there are 32 less panels in the Kirby comic. This wouldn't be so bad if the story content balanced out so there would be more story and less art. Unfortunately, we get less art, less story, but unfortunately, we pay equal money.

Kirby also has a bad habit of giving us several splash page-sized "panels" in his comics. By doing this, he gives us even less panels than he usually does (which isn't many). In most comics, there is one splash page and maybe another one or two page-sized panels now and then. But Kirby goes as far as having up to four or five page-panels. For the sake of his art he again robs us of story.

Kirby's "new" style began just before his leaving Marvel in 1970. He began using the four-panel-a-page technique, but at least he had a writer who could fit the story to the art: Stan Lee. Right now Kirby shouldn't be writing.

("I have to interject here. I feel that judging Kirby's art by the number of panels on a page is an inadequate system of judgement. Why does it matter that an artist violates the "number of panel" law? If he uses the panels well, so what if there are 30 or 60? What we should ask is does Kirby utilize every panel to its limit? No, I don't think so. He needs a disciplined writer. He is guilty of what filmmakers would call "wasted shots" he holds his pen and ink camera too long, points it too long, dwells too long on certain points of view too long, so that one is left with the feeling that there is no substance to the storytelling, just a meandering camera and an undisciplined director (DEVIL DINOSAUR is the worst offender of this, so bad, in fact, it is unintentionally funny). About Kirby's art, and the actual visual feel of it, the worst thing I can say about it is it is sloppy at best. It doesn't look realistic, sure, but then his style is expressionistic, and realism shouldn't be a criteria. I like Kirby's art, but I admit that it is an acquired taste, like the Alex Nino fans who don't like Neal Adams work, or the Adams fans who don't like Frank Robbins, based usually on whether you like firm, realistic art, or formless and jagged expressionistic art. Now the storyteller Kirby, there I agree with Bob..."
--Bill-Dale)

story

I would be the first to admit that Jack Kirby has a fantastic imagination. The trouble is, he doesn't always channel it in the right direction. I believe that Kirby was in the prime of his writing life when he had his Fourth World series at DC. NEW GODS, MR. MIRACLE, etc. can go down as some of the finest works of all time and I seriously mean that. After these titles were cancelled, I think Kirby was on the decline. True, KAMANDI and OMAC, his later creations were good, but they didn't quite match the quality of their predecessors (side note: I think it's a bad idea on DC's part to try to link all the Kirby creations together lately. The Fourth World characters were supposed to go together; the uniqueness of the others was just that: They were unique; they stood alone and showed Kirby's creativity in other areas). In mid-1975 Kirby moved to Marvel and began to infect it with his ideas.

I said earlier that Kirby improperly channeled his ideas. As witness to this, let's take a look at some of Kirby's series and briefly analyze each.

To begin with, look at 2001: A SPACE ODYSSEY. It was the science fiction movie of the late 60's. The STAR WARS of The Beatles Era. So after a decade Jack Kirby comes up with the "great" idea of making it into a comic book series. Perhaps it would be more appropriate to say "making it a comic series", because that's what it turned out to be. In the '60's it might have made it, but in the 70's it didn't stand a chance. It's truly ironic: 2001: A SPACE ODYSSEY being an anachronism in the 70's when it shouldn't rightly be for another 24 years. Maybe Kirby was thinking somewhere along the lines of "as one anachronism writing another, you might have a chance." Besides being out-dated, each issue seemed to be in a universe all its own--which it was. There seemed to be no continuity until MISTER MACHINE came along (more on him later). Unfortunately, MM came along in the last two issues of the title; by that time, it was (as the song says) "Too much, too little, too late" to save the book.

Now on to Kirby's adventure series. CAPTAIN AMERICA started to read more like 'Lost in Space' than one of Marvel's best comics. In the space of thirty issues (just 2½ years in the life of a comic), we went from "All the President's Men" (Engelhart's storyline) to "1984" (Kirby's) and the way sales dropped, it looked like the book would be in the "Final Days". The Black Panther had a similar problem. One minute he seemed to be fighting the Klan in a remake of the Civil War (which was one of McGregor's best works) and then T'Challa is fighting a big-headed (literally) displaced being from six million years in the future. Kirby has to realize that books can't change their inflection just like that; a suitable transition period has to take place. The only thing that remained almost unchanged in Cap's series was S.H.I.E.L.D. and Sharon Carter.

The Black Panther wasn't so lucky. Everything from JUNGLE ACTION was forgotten--not such much as a fottnote explaining what happened between the Klan in the last issue of JA and the search for "Solomon's Tomb" in the first issue of BLACK PANTHER. In the blink of an eye, BP lost all of his old friends (and enemies) and was consorting with a weird dwarf called Abner Smith a member of a group of equally weird collectors. No continuity, no nothing. I'm truly surprised that BLACK PANTHER has survived after 10 issues.

And now to some of Kirby's own creations. This time I can start out on a more happy note. I really liked THE ETERNALS. I first thought it was just a redone version of the NEW GODS, which I had also liked, but I then saw that the way Kirby handled it was different; I was sorry to see it cancelled.

I may have liked THE ETERNALS, but not so Kirby's latest productions, DEVIL DINOSAUR and MACHINE MAN. To start with I'll give a quick rundown on their backgrounds. First, Devil is a dinosaur who is supposed to be as smart as men and likes to run around with a furry little kid named Moon Boy (wonder

JACK KIRBY - KING OR COMMONER? (continued)
by Robert Sallion

where Kirby came up with a name like that?) Kirby seems oblivious of the fact that paleontologists 20 years ago discovered that Man and dinosaurs didn't live at the same time. Kirby's reasoning went something like, "Why should I care about what happened 20 or so years ago, when I'm writing about what happened 20 billion or so years past?" The unfortunate thing is that alot of Kirby's readers do care.

MACHINE MAN, also called Mister Machine, or Son of 2001 is a robot from the future with human emotions. A being more of a robot than the Vision, but at the same time more of a human than Howard Cosell. First a dinosaur with human emotions, now a robot with human emotions, what will we have next? I will admit that MM has a bit more thought put into it than DD (the dinosaur, not the blind guy), but I don't think it has much of a chance. Why, you ask? The answer is in Kirby's weakness as a writer. His villains have some of the corniest names in the history of comic books. The Night Flyer in CAPTAIN AMERICA is one example. And the villain that MACHINE MAN is fighting in his 5th issue takes the cake. His name--can you believe this?--is Ten-For! After this what are we supposed to expect? Adam-12? Over-and-Out? Myyy Gawd!

Kirby would get along much better if he didn't insist on total editorial control on the book. He should do as Steve Ditko does at DC. Plot the story and have the dialoguing done by a capable writer. It is also only going to be a matter of time before he is no longer editor on his books and perhaps that would be for the best.

If Kirby does keep control of his work, he should try to keep a bit of continuity into it. If he says a certain series is going to be in the "Marvel Universe" all right, let it be, but if he is going to guest-star an established hero, let it be the real thing, not some cheap imitation. The "cosmic Hulk" in THE ETERNALS was, bluntly put, sheer crap. The letter column "armadillo" made such a big deal about the series fitting into the Marvel mythos and that the Incredible Hulk was guesting that we get all worked up and are in the end having to settle for a cosmic-powrred robot. Do we really need this?

After reading this article one might say that' I'm dead set against the man. In truth, I'm not, but he seems only to write to satisfy his own needs. That's fine, but in doing that, he should also satisfy the readers' tastes. Well, maybe his next series will be better...

--Robert Sallion

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BEASLEY REVIEWS...

AQUAMAN 63

Kupperberg may be writing, but that's no excuse for Levitz allowing a loose thread like Mera and Aqualad's (lack of) participation in this issue: Aquaman, lad, and Mera swim down to the "original" Atlantis on page 7. Lad and Mera are next seen page 17. Yes, we know it's Aquaman's book, but the Aquafamily sequence seemed contrived just to have Aqualad ask Mera where the (late) Aquababy is.

WONDER WOMAN 245

One would think somebody would tell Diana Prince that she looks ugly with her hair brushed back... WW's biggest problem is going to be ~~to~~ rid the title of cliche-ridden-tomato-surprise endings.

DEFENDERS 61

Aside from the fact that Hellcat should have been lost in her own cape by now, what was Spidey's web attached to in the battle scene? Dollar Bill's bridgework?

FANTASTIC FOUR 196

You know you're in trouble when Alicia is out of character on the cover. It does turn out to be an illusion, but... Never should a writer be under his own editorship -- especially when he's trying to do comedy. Bad enough it's four issues until the reuniting of the Fantastic Four, but do we have to put up with non-so-funny parodies of John Wayne in the mean time?

INCREDIBLE HULK 225

This issue is understandably predictable. You can't have a comic called the Hulk if you don't have the Hulk to stick in it. Roger Stern takes seven pages to turn a comatose Bruce Banner back into the Hulk. The rest of the issue, sans a one-page interim promising another plotline soon, is the obligatory fight scene with the Hulk uttering the most grammatically sound dialogue he's said in years.

SPIDER-WOMAN 5

Wouldn't it be interesting to see if Infantino could draw Jessica so that it wouldn't look like she'd burst if somebody bumped into her bustline?

--Valeria Beasley

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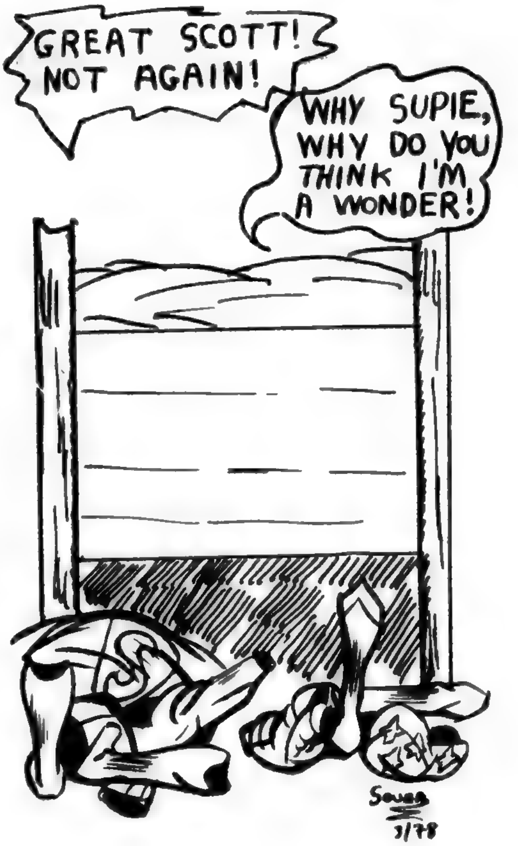

GREAT SCOTT! NOT AGAIN!
WHY SUPIE, WHY DO YOU THINK I'M A WONDER!
Sousa
3/78

A PICTURE OF RAISINS MATING brought to you by Mr. Clavell Spim.

EMRATH'S COLUMN

paul emrath

Justice League 155-156

The art on this books grabs high marks, consistenly. Considering the quantity of their output, penciller Dick Dillin and inker Frank McLaughlin have struck a remarkably high standard. There's no scrimping on detail for them. The main JLA question, in recent months, has centered around the scripts. Specifically, just how much quality has DC sacrificed in moving from Steve Englehart to Gerry Conway?

Actually, Conway has performed somewhat better than I expected. A foundation of one to two really solid ideas has supported each of his stories (thanks, I would guess, to Julie's editorial influence), and recent JLA dialogue scores a point or two above Conway-normal.

Initially, I shuddered at the prospect of Conwayism unleashed in Justice League. I was really afraid they might lead to something like this:

Superman: "Why is that purple?"
Green Lantern: "I don't know. I'm not a scientist."
Flash: "Well, I'm not a space-traveller."
Atom: "Well, I'm not a practical scientist."
Red Tornado: "Well, I'm not a physicist."
Wonder Woman: "Well, I'm not an android."
Batman: "Well, I'm not an Amazon Princess."

Thus far, fortunately, Gerry has spared us anything even close to this. Instead, he has managed some decent -- although admittedly sub-Englehart -- characterization. In #155, Red Tornado displayed some understandable not drastically overstated emotions. He and Wonder Woman also discussed, briefly but significantly on page 8, Superman's power and confidence. It was an effective view of the Man of Steel through the eyes of two near-peers. In #156, Conway again gave Red Tornado some nice lines; however, I most of all enjoyed the verbal confrontation in the epilogue. If you read the issue, you probably remember the scene. It's the one in which the various JLA members explain to the Atom why he should -- or should not -- reveal his secret identity to his fiancee, Jean Loring. This was a rather simple but nevertheless interesting way to emphasize contrasts between Justice Leaguers. A more extensive use of this device -- exploring the way in which each JLA character, individually, reacts to a specific question -- would not disturb me at all.

I am therefore currently quite happy with Conway's Justice League dialogue. To locate the cloud around the silver lining, though, just wander from the dialogue balloons to the panel caption boxes. Often, the captions are almost comically awkward. The primer-offender award descends upon page 28 of issue #155, where unweildy captions explain (if you can believe this) why The Batman is not talking during a fight and (for God's sake) how anomalous a pun would be in this situation. Alot of words filled that page, and we really didn't need any of them.

Moreover, and not atypically, Conway left just a few unanswered questions dangling, particularly at the end of #155. For instance, why, since the aliens could flee at will by changing their bodies into light-beams, did one of them commit suicide when attacked? And if the aliens -- as Gerry told us -- expected destruction at the hands of earth men, what could they possibly intend to accomplish through their attempt to deceive Superman and Green Lantern? Rather conspicuous flaws in logic, aren't they? Also questionable was the way Gerry Conway handled Jean Loring. In #155, he casually mentions that she's in the hospital. In #156, he casually mentions that she's recovered. Now, if a writer is going to go through the trouble of striking a hero's girlfriend with sickness, he should make a big deal of it. We might expect, at the very least, to see one panel of the girl lying in bed. We didn't see it from Conway, though. This reminds me of the blunder Merry Gerry dropped on Marveldom in Thor #203. At the end of that issue Odin berates Thor and banishes him to earth, thus setting the stage for a classic father-son conflict. That conflict, however, never materialized. Thor strolled through several other adventures, and all any fan saw was-- many, many issues later-- a vague reference to the fact that there was once some sort of disagreement between the two.

Oh well... except for the Jean Loring matter, JLA #156 featured a fairly tight plot-- certainly Conway's tightest yet. Perhaps we can attribute this to the straight-forward nature of this particular story, or perhaps Schwartz-- whose books traditionally contain very logical plotting is bearing down on his writer. At any rate, my only complaint about #156 concerns the too-brief fight scenes. The Justice League should not win or lose so easily. The readers need longer struggles, fights that are really fights, and better explanation of why certain strategies succeed where others have failed. (For me, Green Lantern saying, "The trick came in altering Tane's metabolism with the ring...making pure sunlight poison to his plant-based body!" somehow just doesn't work.)

Despite the complaints I've listed, I still think that Gerry Conway's JLA stories have been at worst tolerable. DC does have writers who are more talented in its stable (O'Neil, Wein, Fleisher), but they're more useful elsewhere. Even if I had the power to do so, I would probably make no changes in this book's creative staff. IF

ROBB PHIPPS & S. DELA ROSA.

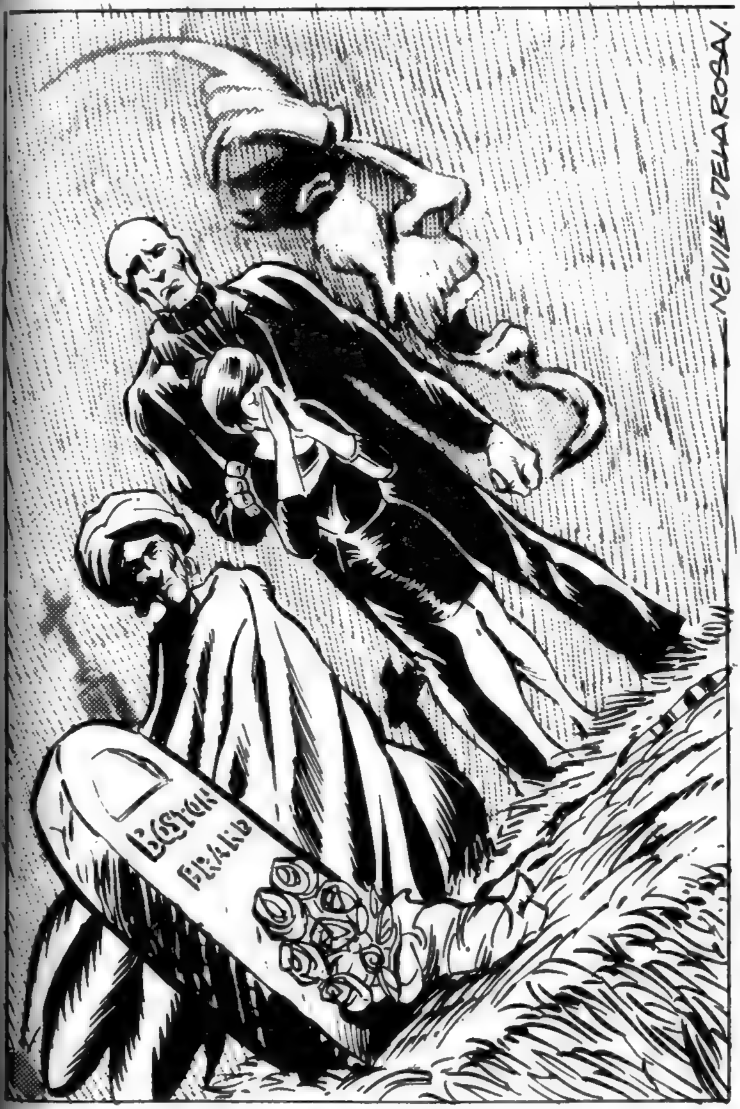
EMRATH'S COLUMN (continued)
Paul Emrath reviews...

Justice League 157

Please observe the following warning:

I am going to criticize JLA #157 not as a comic book, but as a work of fiction.

With that in mind, let's examine the contents of the book. "Till Doom Do US Part" had good art (although I prefer Dick Dillin to fill-in penciller Juan Ortiz, the difference under McLaughlin inks is not that great), an interesting menace, several human interest angles, a sufficient amount of eyecatching action, entertaining dialogue, and enough connections with previous issues to preserve a sense of continuity. This stuff is all right; few people would complain about it.



The story also contained several pages which writer Gerry Conway devoted to the marraige of Ray Palmer and Jean Loring, pages which had no bearing whatsoever on the JLA's struggle with Mauri the Love Goddess. Mauri would have remained freeon earth, would have fought the Justice League, and would have suffered defeat at all in exactly the same manner regardless of any amorous activities between Jean and Ray. Some comics fans have a name for this. They call it a sub-plot which greatly enhanced the story line of the ish. Any place else, they have a different name for it: bad writing.

You see, in other forms of fiction, a writer is not supposed to waste precious space. He's not supposed to give 20 per cent of that space to an unrelated incident, as Conway did.

Arguments claiming that the wedding scenes were interesting enough to stand by themselves or that Conway inserted the scenes so smoothly they didn't disrupt the flow of the main plot, don't carry much weight. If the wedding was that interesting, Gerry should have written an entire story around it. Sure--he worked the scenes smoothly into the story, but look at how that screwed up the adventure's dramatic impact.

In the epilogue, Flash explained how the JLA members broke Mauri's hypnotic spell. Very poor story-telling technique; characters sitting around and telling each other what they already know is always less effective than direct action. Breaking that spell was the climax of the issue, and the readers were cheated out of witnessing it firsthand. In any other medium this would be intolerable. Maybe it will someday be intolerable in comics as well.

Shade 6

I was reading this book--paying attention to the original and brilliant cover, the imaginatively free art, the inventive use of color, the way the story line maintains its intensity by always twisting in a new direction after a crisis--when I suddenly recalled the criticism I had seen in previous Shade letter columns. Certain fans, it seems, want creator Steve Ditko to stuff Shade into a more definite costume--so the Metan will resemble other, more standard superheroes. They also become upset, because Shade is unlike anything they've read before.

This started me thinking of several questions. For example... why do we need Shade, when we already have a multitude of more traditional comic characters? In fact, why do we need those more traditional characters? We've had Superman for 40 years, now, and he sells better than the rest of them. Wouldn't it make more sense to publish nothing but 80 Superman comics every month? Come to think of it, why do we need comic books at all? Certainly anyone will admit that we had other, perfectly good forms of fiction before 1938. Then, of course, we must ask if we really need fiction. We already have real people living real lives; you'd think that would be enough. On the other hand, why does this planet need people anyway? After all, most species were doing as well--and several were doing considerably better--before they ever encountered mankind.

Then, having considered the above questions, I realize their inherent stupidity. You see, the people who most desperately need the answers are the only ones who can't supply them.

"And now, for introducing Paul around... He lives at this postal designation: 5075 North 83rd Street, Milwaukee, WI 532= 53218. This summer he has lucked out, and will be attending the Indiana University Writer's Conference, at which Ursula Le Guin (my favorite sf author(ess)) will be teaching a sf-fantasy workshop. I asked Paul if he wouldn't mind relating his experiences there, so what do you think, would you like to see that in a future (I'm optimistic today) issue of AFTA?" --Bill-Dale)

And, now, back to Paul...

Superboy & LSH 239-242

The Legion of Super-Heroes has, throughout its existence, confounded me. Although I to this day regard it as the clumsiest and most unmanageable comic book idea of all time, it somehow always works really well in practice. Recent issues follow the same pattern; author Paul Levitz has unearthed such a wealth of interesting story ideas, even the unfortunate absence of Tyroc goes largely unnoticed. (Tyroc is one of the newest and, according to a DC poll, one of the most popular Legionaires.)

Right now, the only problem with the book is consistency. From issue to issue the quality varies alot, especially the art. First we get a spectacular job from Bob Wiacek, then a rather bland one from Jack Abel. Then, #238 was a reprint. With Jim Starlin wielding the pencils, though, I anticipated that #239 would be a high spot--a peak, so to speak, instead of a valley.

On three separate occasions, I thought "Murder Most Foul" was going to disappoint me. The opening splash gave promise of an unimaginative and unwanted Star Wars spin-off. Soon thereafter, the story began to resemble a not-too-instant replay of Adventure #316. Finally, as soon as he poked his gray head into the tale, Marla loomed as a fairly ordinary and predictable candidate for villain of the issue.

Each fear, however, eventually and happily proved goundless. None of the subsequent 33 pages reminded me in the least of Star Wars. (I never have fathomed the reason for that movie's overwhelming popularity. Sure the special-effects catch your eye, but the basic average comic book certainly presents--on any level--a more satisfying adventure). The 7th panel of page 8 deflated fear number 2, showing that the staff was well aware of that previous story in Adventure. (That story parallelled this one, in that Ultra Boy was a renegade fleeing from the rest of the Legion. Not mentioning that parallel would have seemed an unforgivable oversight, like Nixon going to trial again and no one mentioning Watergate.) And Marla, surprizingly, did not fill the villain's role after all. The real culprit was a Wildfire robot. Not bad. It seemed like a conceivably logical maneuver on the part of an ingenious Legion adversary.

So the story in this issue was entertaining, and the artwork was spectacular. Starlin hit us with pages of dramatically large panels, pages of incredibly precise detail, and pages of intensely creative layouts. I enjoyed them all. Rubinstein, meanwhile, supplied some of the most impressive outer space backgrounds since the days of Sid Greene. (Remember him? I still think his pen and brush work in Justice League #73 & #74 ranks as the greatest ever.) At times I'm

tempted to call Rubinstein the best inker, and Starlin the best penciller, in comics. Individually or together, their efforts are always sensational--although, sadly, a littl too infrequent.

In issue #240, the Paul Levitz typewrite spewed forth a lead story titled "The Man Who Manacled the Legion." From the bottom half of page 2 through page 5, the story presented a short introductory scene which really didn't have anything to do with the rest of the adventure. People who are prepared to overlook this flaw (a group that probably doesn't include myself) should enjoy the script, which mixed fairly good dialogue with alot of interesting plot twists.

The art of Howie Chaykin and Bob Wiacek, however, was something of a disappointment. Originally, I thought Wiacek's meticulous inking style would be the perfect device to solidfy Chaykin's imaginative layouts. That' what I thought. As it turned out, Chaykin's layout seldom rose above the level of the ordinary--and, more surprisingly, Wiacek almost never did anything to significantly improve the pencils. For Wiacek, this was a drastically sub-par performance--which ceased to be surprising when I realized that the performance was not really (or totally) his. It certainly looks as though Bob got a little help from his friends (with friends like these, etc...) on the assignme If some ghost inker did not in fact lend one of his spectral hands in the assistance, I'm at a loss to explain what happened to the art. It's difficult for me to pinpoint exactly what Wiacek did and what he didn't do, but I'd speculate that he had very litt input on the last few pages.

The issue's back-up feature, "Dawnstar Rising," struck me the opposite way. I enjoyed the art. (It's amazing how good James Sherman's pencils look when Bob McLeo inks them.) I didn't care much for the

RATH'S COLUMN (continued)
ul Emraths reviews comics with a
arp eye...

evitz-Kupperberg script.

For one thing, the idea of a story ased on the Legion Academy doesn't thrill . Establishing the current Legionaires, ith their myriad costumes and powers and ibles, seems to be a large enough task ithout introducing fringe groups. If a riter can't find workable characters for is story in a roster of over twenty Legionires, many of whom have never been developed n any depth, then something must be wrong.

NEVILLE
DELAROSA

Another problem concerns the story's lack of realism. Why, you wonder, would a reasonable person (a description of myself, for those who don't recognize it) expect realism from a bunch of super-powered teens running and flying around in the Thirtieth Century. Well, if a writer constructs a plot logically and centers it around characters who behave as recognizable members of homo sapiens, he can certainly help his readers suspend their disbelief a little. I might even suggest that this is an important part of a fantasy writer's job. Here, the change in Dawnstar's attitude happened too abruptly. At least I never met a person who changed his entire outlook on life in three panels.

The next two issues of Superboy (#241 and 242) contain the first chapters in a spectacular intergalactic war adventure. For this project, author Levitz joined forces with the once again very effective team of Sherman and McLeod. I'm enjoying the story and would recommend that comics fans pay attention to what's happening in this comic, but with a word of caution. Right now, after issue #242, readers have before them a series of events that seem mysterious yet somehow related to each other. It's very nice for a writer to provide his readers with a tantalizing mystery. It's much nicer, and much more difficult, to solve the mystery in a logical manner that explains all loose ends. Based on his track record, I shouldn't really expect Levitz to botch this. Similar botchings have occured before in comics, though, and not all that infrequently.

As a matter of tangential concern, a highlight in this and other recent Legion stories is the way the staff is handling Wildfire--both visually and with respect to characterization. The reflections on his face plate make for an interesting graphic touch, and drawing them must require some additional effort. Also, Wildfire has clearly emerged as aLegionaire with a personality. It's comforting to have at least one.

Meanwhile, the back features have been less inspiring. The work of artists Arvell JOnes and Danny Bulanadi is not bad, but not as good as that of Sherman and McLeod. Also, the Paul Kupperberg scripts (Levitz plotted the tale in #242) have had a couple rough spots.

"My Brother's Keeper," for instance, seemed to me like it would confuse newer readers. Such a reader would be bound to wonder why Timber Wolf and Light Lass are members of a group called the Legion of Super-Heroes. In this story they don't appear to have super-powers, except that Light Lass seems to be super-humanly adept at getting captured without a struggle.

"Girl's Night Out" was a little better, but it suffered from dialogue that was both excessive and corny--an irritating combination.

Overall, I would rather editor Al Milgrom had expanded the lead stories to book length--though this probably would not have been practical.

Avengers 171-172

Writer Jim Shooter, artist George Perez, and inker Pablo Marcos all ply their talents with better than average results. What, then, is wrong with this book? Quite simply, it is too difficult to read.

Shooter portrays the physcial and emotional relationships between super-heroes extremely well; therefore, he makes an ideal team book scripter. Moreover, and according to the Perez interview in AFTA #1, Jim has adapted to the Marvel style a lot faster than many writers do. (Pardon the digression, but the preceding sentence leads to another matter. You see, at the last Chicago Comicon, every writer in attendance firmly stated that no such thing as a "Marvel style" or a "DC style" of writing existed-- that style varied purely in accord with the tastes of individual author-artist teams. Yet, Perez here talks about adapting to the Marvel style. Does this mean that at DC writers can use any style they wish, while at Marvel they are forced to use a house style? If so, it carries all kinds of

EMRATH's COLUMN (continued)
Paul Emrath reviews comics with a sharp eye and a keen mind...

implications.) On the Avengers, Mr. Shooter displays one solitary but nevertheless curcial shortcoming: over-crowding. He calls for too many panels and uses too many words. They crowd the primary flow of action into obscurity.

What, meanwhile, does Perez contribute? You know George; in his AFTA #1 interview he told us how he has adjusted to a much better story-telling technique than that of Neal Adams. (Yes, this is another annoying digression. For me, personally, Adams is virtually the best story-teller in the business. When I look at Adams characters, I get an incredible feeling of solidity. I can see they've got their feet planted on the ground, and I can almost feel the muscles they're using when they move. Frequently,I can even determine the tone of their conversation from their body and facial expression. In short, their emotions come through. Of course, we all know how unimportant that is in comic book art. Hmm...is it possible that some Neal Adams subtleties lie beyond the grasp of even his so-called peers?) I have a question. If Perez is such a superb story-teller, why did the first of 6 panels on page 16 of issue #171 require 173 words of explanation? I paged through this issue, covering up the words as well as I could with only ten fingers, trying to decipher the action from the pictures alone. According to Perez, this is how you judge a good story-telling artist. Well, even after I'd read the story once, every page--in fact, nearly every panel--gave me nothing but confusion.

Don't misunderstand. I think Perez and Marcos are good artists, just as Shooter is a good writer. To produce a good comic, though, they must make it easy for the reader to understand the action on some basic level. (Unless, of course, they assume the reader is so dumb they can sell the book by confusing him--which may, in sad truth, often by the case.) Given the tiny panels and profuse sentences in Avengers #171, the operative word should virtually be possible instead of easy. What a waste. If the men involved would only clean up their act a little, The Avengers could become an excellent comic.

Strangely enough, although #172 was indeed a cleaner book (averaging less than 5½ panels per page compared to over 7½ for #171), Ididn't like it much better. For one thing, the fill-in art of Sal Buscema and Klaus Janson failed to impress me. Next to the layouts of Perez, those of S. Buscema appear somewhat dead and unimaginative. Also, Janson just doesn't seem to be inking with quite the intensity he had a couple years ago. I don't know; maybe the struggle of meeting deadlines month after month is influencing his work. At any rate, the work of Klaus and Sal in this issue was adequate. It doesn't measure up to the standard those two established in the 1976 Defenders book, though

Compounding the noticeable decline in art quality, Jim Shooter turned out for #172 what I will charitably call an empty script. The readers had to navigate a rather circuitous 17 pages only to arrive at the same point they reached at the end of #171--characters disappearing and everyone wondering why. Shooter's interjection of a battle with Tyrak was well-executed but ill-timed, interesting only in its total lack of dramatic purpose. Basically, Mr. Shooter spent a lot of his energy explaining who was and who was not taking part in the adventure. As a result, Avengers #172 read more like a scorecard than a story.

What we really need is an Avengers story fashioned with the clear and relatively uncluttered panels of #172, drawn with the skill and imagination of #171, and plotted with the power and precision of Jim Shooter's Legion of Super-Heroes tales. Then, we might actually have one of the three or four best comic books on today's market.

Avengers 173-174

Let's begin with the artists. Sal Buscema and D. Hands drews #173; Dave Wenzel and Pablo Marcos drew #174. Hmmm,the opening splash page of #173 looked more like the work of Marcos than anything I saw in #174. (This, incidentally, happens quite frequently: splash pages done in a different style from the rest of the issue. I'm starting to wonder how thoroughly I can trust an issue's credits, especially on a number of monthly titles.) In fact, #174 is one of the least impressive efforts I've ever seen from Marcos. Either Pablo was rushed, or Wenzel is not a very strong penciller, or the two just don't work that well as a team. (This would not be discrediting either penciller or inker; conflicting styles prevent many individually great artists from working well together.) At any rate, the art produced by the Perez-Marcos team seems far superior to me.

Moving over to the writer's side--Jim Shooter plotted the stories for these issues, working with David Michelinie on #173 and Bill Mantlo on #174.

Now, I have serious rservations about Michelinie writing for Marvel. As far as I know, David likes to control the production to a greater extent than any other writer. (Most give more freedom to the artist. According to Joe Orlando, this is the reason Don Newton left the Star Hunters series.) At Marvel, to the best of my knowledge, a writer must sacrifice control for speed--giving the illustrator a much greater share

of control over the final product. We therefore have the writer who likes the most control working in an enviroment that permits him the least control. It will be interesting to see how Michelinie adapts to the situation.

How did he fare this time? The story for #173 was actually better than the story for #172, but not by much. At least readers discovered the identity of the villain who was snatching Avengers. I would like to have seen this on about the third page of the previous issue, but apparently somebody thinks one event related to the plot in every other issue is sufficient. I did think that the scene on pages 11 and 13, where Michael secretly observes several of Marvel's most powerful characters, was a strong one. Scenes like this are of course common in Marvel comics and often have no purpose beyond sneaking a picture of Spider-Man into the book. Here, though, the scene did serve a purpose. It demonstrated Michael's power as nothing else would have, and so it was quite effective.

ROBB PHIPPS
S. DELAROSA
78

On the negative side, we have pages 2 and 3, pages featuring Hercules and Natasha. What were these characters doing in this issue? For those of you who haven't read the story, the correct answer is nothing. There existed not a single reason for them to be in this book. I really have to wonder how they slipped in there.

One possible explanation might be the department store philosophy, a sales philosophy based on confusion. If you own a retail store, this concept instructs you to design the place so that it confronts any potential consumer unfortunate enough to wander into its confines with an overwhelming barrage of senseless shapes and colors. In theory the customer will buy alot of your merchandise, simply because he's confused. I understand the technique is really quite effective.

Either the people putting together the Avengers comic are trying something like this, or we have to search pretty hard for an alternate explanation. The only one I can see is total incompetence. (With an editor, two writers, and an artist involved in the plotting, though, it gets tough to assign specific responsibility.)

After that tirade, I'm almost embarrassed to say that the story in Avengers #174 was excellent. Somehow, Shooter and Mantlo tied the significant plot elements together and took them to the point they were supposed to be taken. Considering the change in writers and artists, this is sort of surprising. I can only reiterate that this issue turned out quite well. Too bad Perez wasn't around to illustrate it.

Therefore, if you missed the last 2 or 5 or 10 issues of the Avengers, don't sweat it. Just read #174.

Captain Marvel 55-56

This book is worthwhile for its art. The art, in turn, is worthwhile for Bob Wiacek's meticulous inking. Pat Broderick's pencils could actually be quite good, but beneath Wiacek's overpowering pen strokes I really couldn't tell. Anyway, the art completely snared my attention from beginning to end--which was fortunate, because it at first prevented me from noticing the inconsistencies in the story.

What inconsistencies? Well, in #56, Mar-Vell defeats Deathgrip by donning the murderer's protective gloves. These gloves, we learn, provide insulation against Deathgrip's power--explaining why he always removed them before killing someone with his touch. Of course, it doesn't quite explain how he was able to kil in #55 when the glove were still on his hands. It doesn't explain the little magic act we saw, either. Presto! Between issues, while Deathgrip had his homocidal hands locked around Cap's weakening form, the gloves mysteriously disappeared. Were we really supposed to miss a detail like that?

Also, why didn't anybody say anything about Mar-Vell's job at the observatory in #56? This seemed strange; a substantial part of #55 dealt with Cap acquiring that job, and much of this issue's action transpired within

THE INCREDIBLE HULK
S.Bycko '78

EMRATH'S COLUMN (continued)
Paul Emrath reviews Capt. Marvel...

the observatory. A cosmic hero rips off his mask, enters the work force, and a few minutes later no one remembers it? The characters, as well as the plot, are a trifle inconsistent.

Okay, we could blame writer transition for this. (Scott Edelman scripted #55; Doug Moench handled #56.) The way Marvel churns out comics, however, inconsistencies of this nature frequently occur under the guidance of a single author. My main objection centers around the connection between the two issues. The fight with Deathgrip was essentially a separate story from Cap's search for a job, but approximately 5 pages of the Deathgrip fight appeared at the end of the previous issue. Am I expected to believe that they couldn't somehow fit one struggle with one villain into one issue? It's as though Marvel in general is deliberately confusing their readers--senseless breaking up stories and presenting them in more than one issue--hoping that on one will notice the inconsistencies. I guess this diversion is easy to understand; after all, it's much easier than writing good stories.

Oh, excuse me. For a second, there, I almost forgot that I am a comics fan. Spreading stories over several issues is a sign of Continuity, so it must be a great idea.

CAPTAIN MARVEL 57

Several months ago, Marvel published a very nice comic called Avengers Annual #7. If you read Avengers Annual #7, this book will remind you of that fact. If you missed Avengers Annual #7, this book will remind you of that fact.

This book will remind you of little else. It will particularly not remind you of preceding issues of Captain Marvel.

Once again, Marvel has changed writers on this title. Scott Edelman scripted #55, Doug Moench with Jim Shooter scripted #56, and Roger McKenzie scripted #57. As you'll notice, that makes four writers in three issues. Staff changes like this are responsible for all kinds of interesting little things we see in comics--chaos, for example.

Therefore, as readers of Captain Marvel, we might be tempted to ask the following questions:

Will we ever see what happened to the jo Mar-Vell acquired in Captain Marvel #55?

Will we ever see wh happened to the owner of the shadowy face watchin Mar-Vell in Captain Ma #56?

Will we ever see idea introduced in on issue developed in a subsequent issue of this magazine?

If the answer to the first three question no, will we care?

The sarcasm is flowi here, but I am actually trying to make a point. Despite Kurt Vonnegut' wishes to the contrary, stories are still supposed to have beginnings and middles and ends. If this comic is going to flood us with an unending series of beginnings, if concepts are continually started in one issue and not developed in the next, then waning interest might become a real problem. The same problem, to an even more exaggerat degree, surfaced in recent Kirby titles such as the Eternals. At least in Captain Marvel, writer transition provides something of an excuse. If the readers aren't getting effective stories, though, is any excuse sufficient?

Machine Man 1-4

Current fan opinion would, I guess, list Jack Kirby as one of the greatest artists in comic-book history but question his ability as a writer. Following such genera trends of thought with my usual tenacity, I, of course love Jack Kirby's Machine Man stories but hate his Machine Man art.

To explain my feelings--or lack thereof--toward Kirby art, I can only say that I didn't grow up reading his Fantastic Four like many comic readers did. As a result I never became quite acclimated to Jack's foreful, but not necessarily therefore accurate, version of human anatomy. In particular, his renderings of hands and mouths often bother me. These features, under the Kirby pencil, sometimes look so strange I get no sense of expression at all from them. Admittedly Kirby can do certain things better than anyone else, but most of these things are simply not evident in Machine Man.

For one thing, I can't really understand Jack's continuing predilection for monochromatic uniforms. The one-color costumes merely emphasize the little, or not-so-little, anatomical imperfections. I mean, when you're looking at the unbroken maroon expans of Aaron Stack's body, what else do you hav to notice? Wild, segmented costumes (Mantis, the Apokolips villain, is an apt example) make a much better vehicle for Kirby's action-oriented style.

In Machine Man I don't see any costumes of this type, and I don't see any of those brilliant Kirby detailed-geometric-science-fictiony backgrounds either. In fact, I see art that's good for its blatent kinetic impact (the figures do always look like they're in motion) and not much else. The 2nd page of the 1st issue with its elongated falling-off-the-cliff panels was very

EMRATH's COLUMN (continued, still)

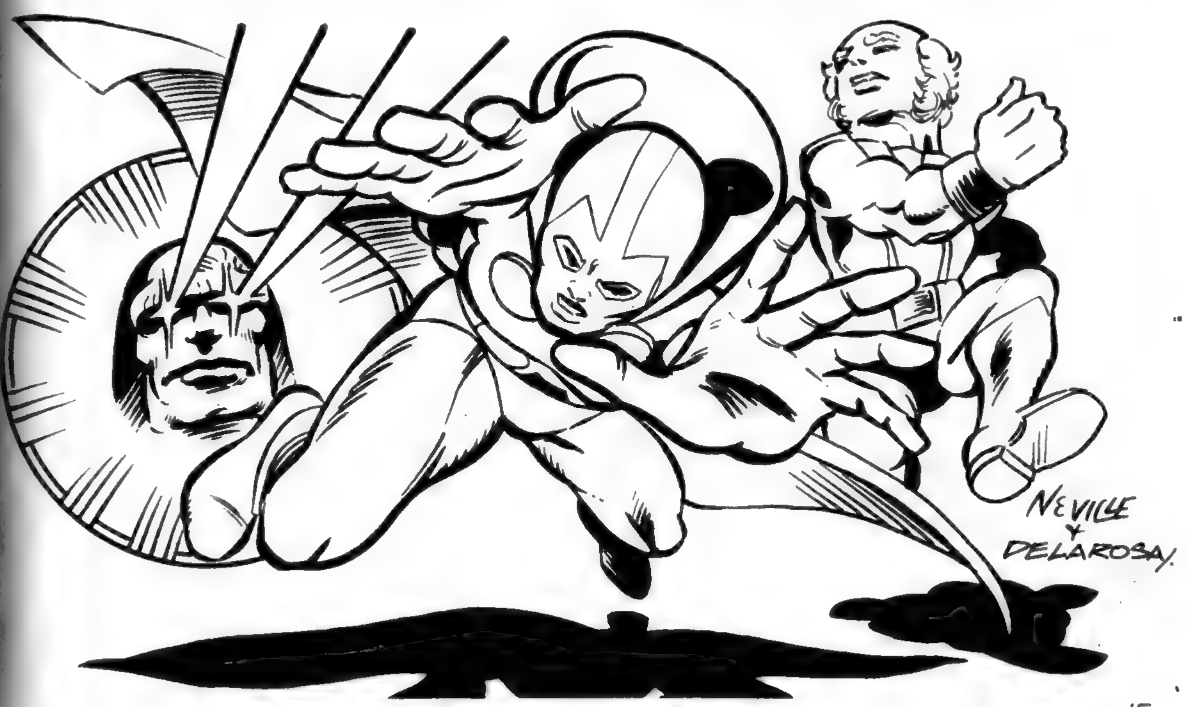
effective, and inker Mike Royer along with colorist Petra Goldberg can take credit for a couple of nice pages (the splash on page 10, for example) in issue #4. Otherwise, Machine Man art has flirted with a level I would call unacceptable from professionals. Like I said, people who fought their way through puberty with Kirby's FF may disagree with my evaluation of his work. This is understandable, but I'll still opt for my own opinion.

On the less critical side, I'm really enjoying the personality of Aaron Stack and the story surrounding him. A major part of this story focuses on the psychological implications of a machine trying to act like a man--like Johnny Average, as Kirby phrases it. It's an interesting concept, one that colors the dialogue and makes it more engrossing than ordinary comic book verbiage. The scene in #4 where Aaron literally rips off his own face emotionally emphasized the man-machine dichotomy and was probably Kirby's best piece of writing in some time.

Although I was happy with all of Machine Man's first 4 stories, I did notice a couple of trouble spots starting to creep over the horizon in #3 and #4. For one thing, Ten-For is a silly name and a pointless one. It lacks even the crude symbolism of a pollution-inducing villain called Chokh (a Denny O'Neil appellation from Justice League of America #79). Also, Aaron Stack's body is in danger of becoming an ultimate deus ex machina a la Mister Miracle's Mother Box. Recently, in Machine Man #4, Aaron figured out how to teleport himself from locale to locale. This was not a bad gimmick to use once, but it's going to cause all kinds of difficulty in the future. If he ever again intends to put his living robot into a tight spot, Kirby will have to really strain in order to devise a believable way of neutralizing the teleportation power. He'll have to do either that, or resort to the dreary "They're attacking too quickly... No time to concentrate on breaking down my atomic structure for a dimensional transfer!" escape route.

Yet another annoying trend is Kirby's reluctance to finish any one particular story line. We've been through 4 issues, now, without experiencing a single major plot resolution. In addition to being irritating, this is unnecessary. In #4, for instance, why couldn't Machine Man have actually defeated Ten-For after the latter had transmitted his fleet-summoning intergalactic signals? That way, the story would have passed through a legitimate climax (Machine Man defeating Ten-For) while still retaining its cliff-hanger ending (the dreaded Autocron fleet coming to earth). Is the occasional defeat of a villain too much to ask? I'm afraid that, if Kirby doesn't consciously try to correct this situation, the book could degenerate into a twenty-different-ideas-presented-but-none-of-them-developed fiasco of the type fans witnesses in the deservedly defunct Eternals comic.

Maybe I'm judging Jack too harshly. Maybe I shouldn't let memories of his past failures (or his current ones; a mysterious force--probably good taste--restrains my hand whenever it tries to grasp a copy of Devil Dinosaur) interfere with the entertainment his Machine Man comic currently provides. Let's just say that I like the stories, if not the art, in this book and leave it at that.



IF

In closing, then, I might just note some of the Kirby philosophy that occasionally worms its way uninvited into his stories.

From MM #1: "The American Dream is a good dream--considering that millions buy it daily."

Isn't that neat? The American Dream is as popular as Coke or Right Guard, and it isn't even advertised on TV.

-- Or, is it?

--Paul Emrath

5075 North 83rd St., Milwaukee, WI 53218

THINGS WHICH YOU COULD
MISTAKE FOR RAISINS IF
YOU AREN'T CAREFUL

⟶

NO. 2 — A TURD

Earwax: Coming Comics

from joseph pilla

(SIT DOWN AND GET A GOOD GRIP ON YOURSELF

DC's daring expansion of its line, with a minimum 50¢-size, and Marvel's recent outpouring of adapted material seem to indicate that intense creative energy has infused the two top companies. Some cynics in the audience might snicker that DC seems to be ~~dredging up~~ reviving every and any past character (short of B'wana Beast...maybe) to fill the extra space, avoiding the creation of truly new concepts and characters. Other cynics (cynics in fandom have never had it so good) carp that any company that would bother adapting MAN FROM ATLANTIS, as Marvel did (even granting the title the line's first dollar-sized try), when the Sub-Mariner is collecting unemployment is about as legitimately creative as ABC, CBS, and NBC (a nifty two-industries-with-one-stone shot).

Well, cynics aside (Don't go away, cynics. When we start discussing the Carter Administration, we'll give you the floor again), I've done a great deal of investigation (through the conservative use of burglary, extortion, bribery, wiretapping, and other sneaky methods as advised by several former high government officials) in just what areas all the activity at DC and Marvel is being channeled. My sources, who must remain anonymous as the companies normally frown on such advanced news as a matter of security, were generous with outlines and details of projects a-borning.

I was pleasantly surprised at the originality and variety of the new material the two major Bullpens are busily producing. Although many are in the embryonic stages, some books along the lines of these revelations will appear soon.

What follows is a list of series and/or books which the editorial staffs have considered and have either set aside, are developing, or have assigned for scheduled or indefinite release dates.

Marvel Comics

Wolfgang By Night

The Marvel Bullpen decided that Jack Russell has suffered enough as the Werewolf, and, since horror wasn't selling anyway, have revamped the character. The springboard premise is the curing of Russell's lycanthropy by sorcery, which inadvertantly causes him to be possessed by the spirit of long-dead great classical composer Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791) No longer becoming a wolf at full moon, Jack now wears a costume resembling sheet music and wages war on putrid musicians and their disasters. The first few issues will detail his battle with Kiss.

The Adventures Of Mike Douglas

Cadence Communications, ever aware for new tv/movie tie-in properties for Marvel, feels it's come up with something to exceed the success of STAR WARS with its acquisition of the rights to adapt THE MIKE DOUGLAS SHOW into comics form. At this point, only preliminary sketches have been done, though a Thing-Mike Douglas issue of MARVEL TWO-IN-ONE to introduce the character is planned. After that, a possibly monthly Mike Douglas book, recently assigned to Steve Gerber (who says he'd rather cut his throat), will commence, with each issue featuring a different Marvel hero as guest host. Early story conferences have produced numerous opening story possibilities, the most promising having Mike defend his show from Ego, the Living Planet, with the Hulk as issue one's guest host. Alternate title: MIKE DOUGLAS, MOUTH MASTER

Dracula the Duck

In a move to save two series with faltering sales and concurrently ease Gene Colan's workload, it's possible that TOMB OF DRACULA and HOWARD THE DUCK will be merged into one series. In a crossover story in the last issue of each title, it will be explained that Drac, seeking new blood in Cleveland, was faced with another Quincy Harker deathtrap (Marv Wolfman favors flooding a sewer with holy water; Steve Gerber prefers a huge garlic sausage). Escaping by turning into mist, the vampire carelessly reforms on a tenement rooftop, in the exact spot where Howard is sitting, reading the latest MOTHER JONES. Thus are merged Dracula's and Howard's physical forms. The produce is a feathered, billed, web-footed, caped Lord of Vampires, who waughs with a Transylvanian accent, can change into a cigar-chomping bat wearing a blue hat and white gloves, and who preys on hairless apes. If Stan Lee gives the go-ahead, the first merger issue may appear by Christmas, and will involve Drac the Drake in a power struggle between Doctor Sun and Le Beaver.

Spider-Family

is coming from Marv Wolfman. The origin issue has Peter Parker, recently jilted by Mary Jane Watson, meeting Jessica Drew and, well...There'll be a number of name-the-kid contests with this one. The speed at which Pete and Jess produce the kiddies (Marv hasn't decided whether any will have four arms.) will establish another proportionate spider-power that Stan Lee never hinted that Pete possessed. A book the Comics Code Authority will watch closely...

Marvel Reversal

Cadence's hierarchy, seeing recent circulation figures of Marvel reprint titles, are convinced that the early stories of the FF, Spidey, Thor, Hulk, and others can be profitably offered again in the regular line. In this newest reprint title, however, a unique touch will be added. The old stories will be reprinted backwards, last page first, last panel on a page first. If this proves sucessful-- and the audience aimed at is small children, new readers, completists, and potheads-- we could see current and new titles, with both reprint and original material, printed in this format. Alternate title: SELAT LEVRAM

Nick Fury of the C.I.A.

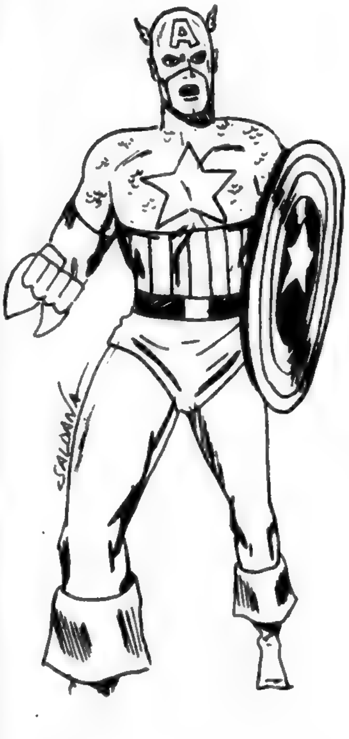
Marvel's youngest senior citizen brings his Military and S.H.I.E.L.D. experience to the U.S. agency beset by charges of illegal, clandestine operations here and abroad. My source, who tapped Roger Stern's phone, says the Bullpen figures the appeal of S.H.I.E.L.D., like James Bond, is basically played out, a

EARWAX from Joseph Pilla
(continued)

the C.I.A., with its exciting counter-insurgency and regime-toppling operations, will be more (cough) relevant. Nick Fury's character and attitudes will be updated from the 60's to the 70's, with the ol' Howler heroically trying to more efficiently accomplish and cover-up the C.I.A.'s illegalities. The intial storyline has Fury being advised that the American Civil Liberties Union is a front for Hydra, which is also responsible for the threats against the white regimes of Rhodesia and South Africa; meanwhile, Dum-Dum Dugan suspects General Trujilos of Panama of being the Supreme Hydra. (A possible WHAT IF? issue (What if Nick Fury and His Agents Were the Watergate Burglars?) could spin-off from this series.

Erotic Tales of the Watcher

will be given its own book (perhaps in the color Super-Special format) or a try-out in MARVEL PREVIEW. Each issue the Watcher will relate a number of boservations he's made over the years that are too, ah... explicit for the regular color line. Stories already completed (The majority of the writers and artists involved say they've doubled their sexual activity as a result), include: one telling what uses Reed and Sue Richards found for their special powers over their honeymoon; another which details how the Avengers have paired-off after wild parties over the years (apparently, it was very interesting when the Scarlet Witch was the only active female member); and a tale in which Doctor Doom demonstrates his favorite contraceptive devices (As you know, he's heavily into armor) A number of stories have had to be re-worked because of, as one associate editor put it, "too much enthusiasm" from artists. The cover painting originally commissioned (the artist's "best work to date") had to be rejected because of widespread drool stains. This certainly sounds like a comics industry milestone.



Marvel Super Special: THE OSMONDS

This book was well under way until the Food and Drug Administration's saccharine ban, which Marvel was unwilling to challenge. It is hoped that adding a few gory killings to the story will make it more acceptable to federal authorities.

DC COMICS

Disco Superman

DC is sensitive to criticism that they are willing to overexpose the Man of Steel while making a fast buck with the tie-in to the release of the huge SUPERMAN movie. My editorial sources there claim they are showing restraint and discrimination in their projects relative to this, and other films. Specifically, they feel this book will placate critics with its fresh angle. It's been delayed indefinitely, however, until someone on the art staff is found capable of rendering Clark Kent and Kal-el to look like John Travolta.

Fatality Comics

is a project specially tailored for Gerry Conway. In each issue, a number of new characters and effete established characters are presented and killed off. Already-scheduled are issues showcasing and finishing-off Perry White (beaten to death by pacifist feminists), Carol Ferris (blown up along with a reactor by crazed protestors of nuclear power), Snapper Carr (mistakenly walks in front of Green Arrow during the latter's target practice), and Iris Allen (hurled off the top of a column of the Central City Bridge by a madman dressed like a goblin)

Krypto and His Canine Commandoes

In an attempt to capitalize on the renewed interest in series set in World War II, and to keep Bob Kanigher busy and away from more important characters and titles, this idea starring the Dog of Steel is being readied for a SHOWCASE try-out. Krypto travels back

EARWAX from Joseph Pilla
(continued)

to 1940 France on Earth I seeking a Kryptonian bone lost. He runs afoul of the Nazis, of course, frees a group of impounded dogs, and starts a Free French Hound Underground (no one at DC will take credit for this.) The group's arch-foe will be the Iron Major's schnauzer, Otto. There is a good possibility that time will be warped to allow Rex, the Wonder Dog to make numerous guest appearances. However, Kanigher has been warned he never will be writing anything but SGT. ROCK again--maybe-- if he tries to insert Dr. Canus, Detective Chimp, Streaky, Animal Man, the Fox and the Crow or other potentially disastrous guest stars into the book.

Prehistoric Prairie Adventures

Dinosaurs are a comic book staple, and the interest in mature Western series is on the upswing. In the face of those facts, this natural blend was conceived and thrown into the lap of new editor Ross Andru (by virtue of his experience with THE WAR THAT TIME FORGOT series). After seeing the completed interior of the premiere issue, managing editor Joe Orlando decided a Neal Adams cover was needed to ~~disguise~~ adorn the contents. Neal's cover, depicting a lone frontier town marshall facing an unsavory gang of trigger-happy triceratops, fronts issue one's book-lengther, "Winchester, 100 Million B.C.".

Young Kryptonian Romances

will feature stories, introduced by Superman, of love, passion, and heartbreak set on Krypton before its destruction. Already completed or assigned to artists include: "Stolen Kisses of the Phantom Zone!"; "The Prize", in which young Jor-el and Zor-el fight over a new girl in their geophysics class; and "Jilted!", a story revealing that the quakes which tore Krypton apart were a direct result of a secondary school student not being asked to her Junior Prom. My source said this book's appearance on the schedule has nothing to do with the Superman film, although even Mort Weisinger thought it silly in 1961 when it was first considered.

Confusing Comics

reunites editor Murray Boltinoff and writer Bob Haney, the team which holds the undispu record for producing stories amazingly contradictory to their past tales and those of other editors. It's hoped that, with this book, Bob can exorcise all of his perv silly plotlines and moronic menaces, leavin none, or, at least, few, for his other books. The first few issues have been outlined (Julie Schwartz visited his docto after learning the details) and, of course, completely contradict one another. In the opener, the Super-Sons join with Bruce Wayne's father and Kamandi to find out why the Haunted Tank is trapped in the Justice Society's satellite headquarters. No detail available on the second except that Pa Ken will be joining Tomahawk's raiders.

Superman's Angels

According to one DC staffer, this is "a very now book." It's a clear attempt to ~~cash in on~~ represent raised feminist consciousness. Three DC veterans, Lois La Lana Lang, and Lori Lemaris join a detecti agency and guess who, never seen, gives the their assignments? The artistic team hasn't been chosen yet, although Joe Orlando will handle breasts.

Jehovah! The One-and-Only Original--GOD!

After years of frustrating effort, DC feel it finally has an answer to Marvel's popul Thunder God. Difficulties have been designing God's costume, establishing His secret identity (Pet shop owner, major leag first baseman, and cab driver were considere and rejected.), defining His powers (He wil not, for example, be everywhere.), providi Him with a headquarters (Heaven would make for little contact with other DC heroes.), and coming up with His one weakness (Devil' food cake won over horse racing.). The groundwork for this series was done in Joe Kubert's Bible adaptation sometime back, though no adaptations are planned in the upcoming book. In the first story, God ha second thoughts about creating Gila monste and decides to scrap them and try again.

Superman vs. Richie Rich

is the first-ever collaboration between DC and Harvey Comics. The premise of this $2.5 tabloid, written by the DC staff and draw by the Harvey staff, is that Cadbury, Richi Rich's valet, accidentally discovers that Clark Kent is Superman. Deciding he's had enough of waiting hand-and-foot on a pre-pubescent bourgeois, Cadbury hopes to sell the world's top secret to the higgest bidde Richie, realizing the valet's greedy plan would ruin the Man of Steel, recruits the of Casper, the Friendly Ghost and Baby Huey. Together, they pursue Cadbury to Superman' Fortress of Solitude where, trying to proj the butler into the Phantom Zone, they rel all of the Zone's criminals instead. Conc rently, Superman is informed that he owes IRS several trillion dollars in back taxes (a fabrication of Brainiac) and so seeks Richie for a loan. Lex Luthor, aware of Superman's imagined plight, turns all of currency in Richie's main vault into Kryp Lois Lane learns that Luthor has been extoring cash (for his plots against Supe from Richie for years, and, for her troubl is locked in the air-tight vault by the fiend, who gloats that Superman must now

EARWAX from Joseph Pilla
(continued)

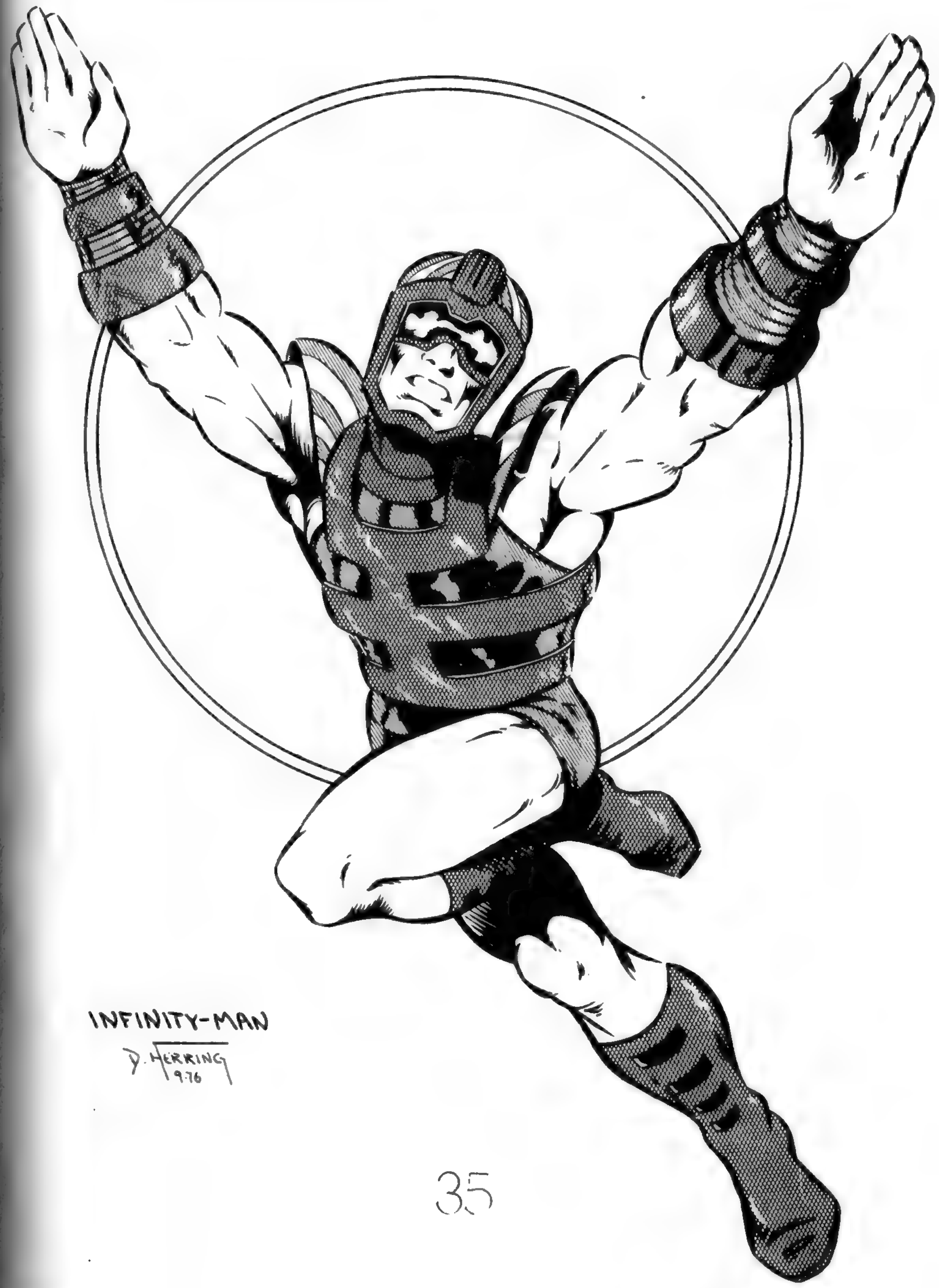
sacrifice his own life to save his love's. Meanwhile, Sad Sack falls in love with Supergirl and Little Audrey menaces Kandor...

E. Nelson Bridwell had a nervous breakdown trying to fit the story into the overall DC continuity, and never did figure on what Earth the story occurs. Despite the large profits which both companies will probably realize for the book, this could be the last time they work together. Harvey's editors thought the tabloid's story too banal, while Jenette Kahn was greatly displeased with how Superman looked in the Harvey house art style. And neither company team showed up for a recently-scheduled softball game in Central Park. Still, DC and Archie Comics might get together for a Superman vs. Jug=head tabloid for next summer... Now, then, doesn't this list prove that comics are better than ever? Excuse me, it's time for my shock treatment...

--Joseph Pilla

RFD 6, Forest Haven Apts., Bullet Hole Road,
Carmel, NY 10512

("Among other things, Joe contributed $25.00 to help save AFTA. Now, I know some of you are saying I give special treatment to those of you who contribute money (last issue Ed Via gave AFTA $50.00). That is just not true. I just give you a column." --Bill-Dale)



CONTROVERSIAL COLUMN

jeff de mos

This is a controversial column, in both senses of the word. Firstly, I've never written anything of this sort, probably never will again, and it's doubtful that my feeble attempts at writing will ever resemble a ... "column." Secondly, I think DC is a better comics company than Marvel. That is, in the second sense of the word. You see I'd really like to get the shit flying here. I'm sure all of you have some very opinionated thoughts about comics and could generally dig expressing them, as I am getting a chance to do. For future record my address is:

326 E. 33rd Street
Baltimore, MD 21218

I like reading letters from fans as much as B.D. does. Maybe even start my own letter column (pant, pant!). I don't intent to bore you, no silly-assed dialogue or gimmicks, just some solid discussion.

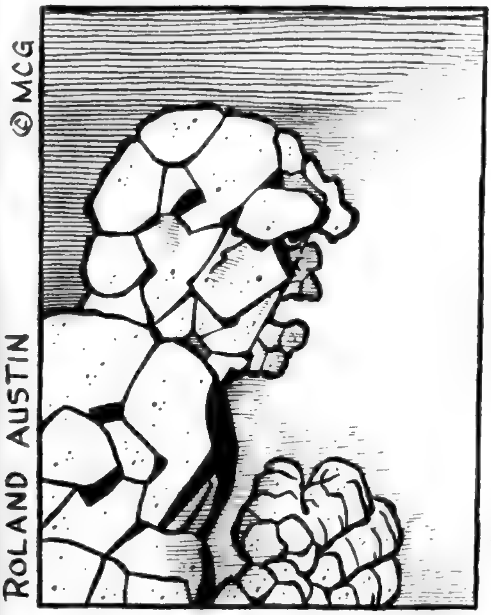
So, anyway, like I said, DC is not only a better company, company-wise, but is more professional, and meets their deadlines. C'mon Marveldom Assembled, consider this a challenge. Not only that but I have yet to read a DC comic without a letter column or something else substituted in its place. "Who cares" you say. Just wait a minute, I'll explain. When's the last time you've read a letter in Thor? Something like once in the last five issues. Oh sure, last issue our good 'ole boy Roy filled us in on the whys and wherefores of his new pursuit, but he loves to do that, he's a former letter writer himself. Now I consider letter columns an integral ingredient of any publication. It's the only real reader rapport comics or any magazine have. Yea, Marvel presents Bullpen Bulletins, but what the hell's that except another quicksell for a buck. Years ago we used to get really nice cover reproductions on the "coming soon" page. Now we have to read about the anticipated books under the pretense of a gossip column. Bulletins don't even have the frequency they should and if I have to see another little picture of that blond with the red waist sash in the lower right corner, I'm going to throw the damn comic out the window. We don't even get that alliterative tongue twister at the top of the page anymore. In other words, the least they could do is hire some semi-retired letterhack to supply a letter column. Even give him a chance for the big time. And just who, by the way, does prepare Marvel letter columns? Does anyone Know? I don't. The bullpen I suppose, whosoever they are. And, lest we forget, how about the innumerable reprints with new covers that sell the comic before we see the reprinted material.

I was going to remark in one of the earlier sentences that the DC staff is a more talented staff (albeit an eclectic talent) than Marvel. That's an impossible statement to make. In case you haven't noticed the industry is going crazy. It's musical companies once again as it seems to be every year about this time. Therefore I can't validly say that DC or Marvel possess the personnel to produce a better comic book. Each company has it's winners The root of the argument usually lies with over-the-years formed opinions and prejudices. I, for one, was reading The Atom and Green Lantern before there even was a Spider-Man, thus my bias toward DC. Even after I witnessed and was a fan of the Marvel industry overthrow and loved it, I still remained a fan of DC's for life. Why? -- who knows. Everyone still loved the Beatles even after John's sacriligious statement about Jesus. Not really an appropriate comparison, but I still loved DC after a more progressive, trendy comic came into vogue.

After that immediate revolution in style, the once "Marvel" style became influenced among a multitude of writers and editors and now it really has become difficult to presently distinguish one company style from the other. That, I feel, is unhealthy for the industry. The main concern now seems to be (in both companies) to make money and/or keep abreast of inflation. Nothing wrong with that except that when any medium' more concerned with its monetary rewards than the art it has to offer, that medium has to suffer. This appears to be more obvious with DC presently than Marvel. Basically, because of the new format that is pending sales figures. I think it's a good move. Although they are trying to feed us the same old bull about more comic for more money, etc, etc, they are becoming the innovators, at least in format. Marvel has rested on their laurels for too long and subsequently have gotten lazy. DC was the king once and will reign supreme once again after the Marvel explosion has subsided, mark my words. Marvel spends too much time tooting their own horn, thanks to the driver of the vehicle, Stan, "The Man" Lee. I wonder how he gets a chance to even be involved with the company, what with his college lecture circuit and books of reprint material. Talk about making a buck. The way I see it, he is hardly involved with the creating of comic books anymore, except with final policy decisions, but he sure likes to take credit. Have you ever seen a "Jeanette Kahn presents" at the beginning of a Superman comic? He takes credit for things uncreditable to him. And that is wrong. He recently quoted a fan at some vague college lecture (he rarely writes of anything else) in one of his soapboxes to the extent that the soapbox used to deal with the philosophy or whatnot of comics and now all he did was plug upcoming projects. In short, he apologized for his mercenary attitu and promised to stop it. What happens? The following month or so he's quacking (no offense Howard) about the Beatles and Close Encounters specials that are underway at Marvel. Mind you, just Marvel's visual interpretation of some one else's genius. Nothing new, nothing we couldn't get elsewhere, just a company making money from others' creative endeavors. At least DC can present us with new creative concepts and not plagerize the artwork of other artists. By now you should be saying to yourself that DC has used many a Marvel concept for their own comic books. Well that's the name of the game. What artist isn't influenced by other artists, and after forty years of super hero it is mighty hard to come up with something totally original. Sure, Firestorm resemble

CONTROVERSIAL COLUMN by Jeff DeMos
(continued)

Nova, but Firestorm is the better comic book, because in the competitive market DC did the only sensible thing. They realized the potential of the nuclear hero Marvel had created and then created their own, superior comic. This brings to mind another quote I heard somehwere (possibly in Rolling Stone), something to the effect that the Rolling Stones (these rock groups keep sneaking in somehow) never started any new trends, rather they absorbed contemporary values, synthesized them, and became a product of the times. They've lasted an eon compared to the usual life span of rock groups. DC does the same thing. Marvel has set some precedents, I'm the first to admit it, but DC sits back and waits to see what is successful and then incorporates it into their own style of comic books. That's the key to survival. Marvel is here to stay, no doubt about it, but DC has the years, the experience, and the know-how to produce a better line of comic. Don't get me wrong, I do like Marvel comics, (Christ, what a hypocrite I am). I like comics period and it really doesn't matter what company produces them if they are good. But in terms of general professionalism DC is better. Have you ever read a derogatory remark in any DC publication putting down anything Marvel does? I haven't. If you have please let me know, it may then be time to change my opinions. The adolescent attitude of the armadillos at Marvel is about as unprofessional as one can get. I'm sure both companies respect the efforts of the other but the wisecracks and innuendoes Marvel makes towards DC are unnecessary, especially in print for everyone to read. That campy, super-cool attitude was alright a decade ago but we've matured a bit since then and it doesn't impress anyone.



© DC COMICS
ROLAND AUSTIN

I suppose a few more words about style should be included. Both companies have become so diverse both in their number of books and individual editorial dictates that it's hard to pinpoint any one style. Marvel once had a unique style (Stan's), that's what made Marvel what it is. It still is evident abit, if only to emulate the Man, but the formula has gotten stale. I've had it up to here with these psychologically sick super heroes. Ailing Aunt May's, weak hearts, teenage growing pains are all acceptable to a certain degree but after a while it gets redundant, and its that redundancy that gets on my nerves. DC once again integrated this into their books but they don't drive it into the ground. I never could stand soap operas and that's exactly what Spider-Man is, although in a different form and labeled a super-hero comic books. I would like to see just once a Marvel hero without the same, contrived hang-ups. A hero such as Flash who is just plain fun to read and I don't have to become emotionally involved with. I've got enough of my own problems. When I read escapist literature, that's exactly what I want to do, escape!

Well, so much for installment One of Controversial Column. These are my opinions, let me know yours, you've got my address and you know Bill-Dale's. As a final thought, I don't mean to sound too pretentious, I don't know a damn thing about the insides of the industry, but that's what a true fanzine is all about, right? Right! See ya later.

--Jeff DeMos

326 E. 33rd St., Baltimore, MD 21218

("THE FIRST SHOT HAS BEEN FIRED! AND THE BATTLE IS ON!!"

I have always looked back with nostalgia to what seemed like a never-ending debate over DC and Marvel that was waged in the 60's fanzines, and I am only too glad to start things up again. In fact, I take up the whole next page just replying to Jeff, angering the Marvelites even more... We're out for blood...

--Bill-Dale)

Do I Hear A Second On It?

This is written by your creaky editor as a reply to the piece what I hope you all just read.

Before anyone starts criticizing us (the fans) for making unreasonable demands on the people in the comix industry (I hear you, Roy, gonna write us one of your letters?)-- let me say this-- I've heard from a lot of people who were once fans who got jobs at Marvel and DC and changed their attitude: "But if you only knew what goes on behind the scenes... were rushed by deadlines and constantly under pressure-- we can't produce good comics if we wanted to..." To those people who rationalize and justify the poor quality of their work, I say this: "Tough shit."

As a writer, I have many times stayed up all night without sleep or food or drink (this has happened many times, and in fact, is happening right now with AFTA 2) to do a second draft of something that didn't hit the target the way I wanted it to. There is no excuse you can make for not being able to work to your potential. Outside censorship aside, if you are talented and you care about what you are doing, you find ways of fighting the pressures and deadlines, and get your work in on time. Ok, if I was the head of DC, I wouldn't trust someone like Neal Adams who produces beautiful work, but habitually misses deadlines (this I suspect, is more because of his own egotism and the sense that he's "too good for comics" rather than the fact that he is a slow and meticulous artist). I would pick a Gerry Conway if I had to trust someone to do the job on time. What I object to (and what I take up your time discussing here) is the conscious attitude that we are producing something to "sell" rather than something of intrinsic value. I'm not against anything being sucessful. Look, Frank Thorne is a wonderful person and loves what he is doing, but he is also a damn good huckster who knows how to control his media (I don't say this derogatorally). And he is sucessful. But with his comic and his show, I for one feels he deserves it.

Art must come first. Once you have a quality product, then you let the PR men take over.

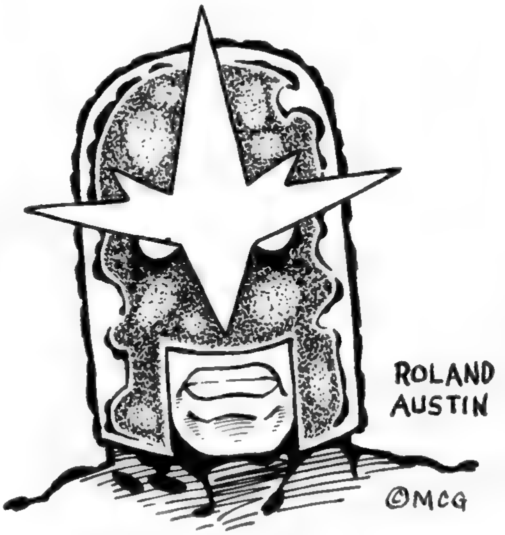
At this point (and at many times in the past), I feel, as Jeff does, that DC has it over Marvel in that they are more professional and dedicated to some kind of quality (even if it isn't a particularly ground-breaking philosophy).

If Marvel has been dedicated to anything, they have been dedicated to hype. They sell the hype, not the product. They try to make it fashionable to buy, ("Join Marveldom Assembled") rather than giving us a reason to buy.

Some "seconds" on Jeff's specific criticisms:

I resent the indifference on Marvel's part in NOT RUNNING LETTERS COLUMNS whenever they feel like it. What happens to the letters? Who reads them? Does anyone? Who does the letter columns? I am not of the school that believes art survives independent of its audience. If a tree falls in the woods, and there is no one to hear it, there is no sound. Anything which is written was at one time written for a reason, for a group of people, for, if you will, an audience. When you ignore your audience, you're asking for trouble. When you ignore your fans (YOUR MOST LOYAL SUPPORT AND YOUR MOST VALUABLE SOURCE OF CRITICISM), you're in trouble. Are you listening Roy? Stan? (Gee, I don't even know who to address it to, 'cause I don't know who is even in charge anymore...)

I applaud DC for experimenting with new FORMATS, if not necessarily new styles. They know that the comics industry will not survive very long in its present form (and as tv sucks more early teen readers in, perhap sooner than we thi and they are at l making decisions the gut level-- FORMAT. Decision that, as a secondary effect, will give writers and artists freedom (if only by havin more than 17 page to tell their stor to experiment.



Comics must look to themselves, to create something ORIGINAL that can' survive in any oth form. Marvel, in adapting movies and trendy heroes of real life, is smart economically, but esthetically, I will oppose such efforts. If comics can exist independent of trends (the way they do in Europe, THEN, and only then, will the art form be taken seriously, and will it gain the support of children and adults alike-- DC and MARVEL: The hottest group economically is the 18-35 year olds-- why the hell are you programming for the 10-12 year olds)

About Marvel as soap opera, I couldn't agree more. With the exception of MacGregor most of Marvel's attempts at relevance fall flat. I'm not one to push escapism (as Jeff does) as the sole purpose of comic books, but when someone can't write their way out of a paper bag, it is better to let them do escapism (Here is my prejudice-- I think it is harder to write realistically (i.e. relevance, if you will) than to write fantas I know I will get letters on that, but so be it-- It is a prejudice and one which I label as such.)

So get your typewriters clicking and pens scribbling-- discussing this issue (although it may seem juvenile tosome of you) has a universal theme. --Bill-Dale Marcinko

A Batman Commentary

Batman 295, 298-302 Detective 476,478 Batman Family 17-19

The addition of a regular Batman story in Batman Family and the departure of Steve Engelhart has resulted in the return of a number of former Batman writers. It as also resulted in a proliferation of different styles and characterizations of the Batman. Every writer see the Batman differently and this affects the sort of story he writes, the way he writes it, and in particular, how he handles the Batman. The kaleidoscopic variety we've been served up by Steve Engelhart, Len Wein, Denny O'Neil, Gerry Conway, and David V. Reed in recent months can be confusing; but is also illuminating not only of the character of the Batman, but of his writers as well.

Steve Engelhart is very concerned with the sort of reality that could create the Batman and his bizarre world. He eschews the real world, creating instead a surrealistic one into which the Batman fits and then convinces us to believe in it. His world has a Lovecarftian flavor where intermixed with the mundanely ordinary occurances of life are glimpses of the incredibly horrible and macabre. As the Batman says, "My life goes crazy sometimes." Steve knows that comics are essentially an emotional medium and draws on the emotion laden images of the Batman mythos: the stalactite filled Batcave, the grotesquely malevolent villains, and, most of all, the shadowy figure of the Batman himself.

This comes dramatically to life in Detective #476. The confortingly ordinary world is left behind, this one is populated by fiends and spectres, a nightmare world brought to life by Marshall Rogers fantastic artwork and presided over by the dread Batman. Steve brings all his carefully developed plot lines to a devastating climax here. The final battle with the Joker over the rainswept rooftops is worth the cost of the comic, in itself, and the last page is a stunning, silent epilogue to the whole work (marred by an error in the coloring, aargh!)

It seems a shame to subject this worthy effort to a diatribe, but Steve has committed here one of the unforgivable sins. A Batman story is essentially a challenge. The Batman is set some problem (catching a crook, solving a mystery) and the writer must come up with some suitable solution. The quality of the story is, in part, measured by how interesting the problem is and how ingenious the solution. But the point is that the solution must be achieved within the limits of the Batman's abilities. These limits are very broad and somewhat flexible, of course, but resorting to the supernatural or anything else to provide the solution (as Steve does) violates the principle of the thing and leaves at least this one fan outraged.

When Len Wein takes over the writing of a comic, he generally is careful to build on his predecessor's work, but he makes the result uniquely his own. So it is with Detective #478 (his first new story) he builds carefully on the situation and characterization of the Batman left behind by Steve Engelhart. But it is not the scene that Steve would have written. It explores the compulsion that drives the Batman, something Steve never really considered. The scene is reminiscent of many done at Marvel: the hero, hurt emotionally, lets loose and/or contemplates quitting. The Batman does not wear his emotions on his sleeve, however, and when his carefully built-up shell is cracked all sorts of dark and ugly things escape. Len shows us this and thus puts it a peg above the usual superhero blues.

The situation with Clayface III is also reminiscent of a standard Marvel ploy: the super villain forced to do evil (murder) to survive, typified by Morbius. But Len adds a horrific "touch" (ouch!) that goes beyond being a human vampire, and makes Clayface III a suitable prey for the Batman. The grotesquerie of the conversation with the mannikin drives home the loneliness of Payne and his fingernail hold on reality. We see little of the Batman in action this issue. His trap at Starhaven was logical, although it hardly required a great intellect to work it out; but the Batman should be far too experienced to allow himself to be caught off guard by Payne's exo-skelton that way. The artwork was up to Roger's usual superb level, but I miss Jerry Serpe's colors. His use of unusual shades to heighten the impact of the artwork is strikingly effective and caused me to take notice of the colorist for the first time. However, Glynis Wein is hardly an amateur and is obviously striving to maintain the effect Jerry achieved. Final judgement must be suspended until we see the conclusion next issue. But I can say that although his interpretation of the Batman obviously owes something to Steve Engelhart and he draws on standard Marvel plot devices, Len Wein has molded the result into something unique.

MOWRY-
DELAROSA
IF

David V. Reed presents a substantially different view of the Batman than Len Wein or Steve Engelhart. He is primarily interested in who the Batman is, what sort of person would act the way the Batman does. The result is that David V. Reed concentrates very much on the Batman himself, his personality and actions. We are shown a very "real" character who snaps at his butler, who works as hard at seduction as at detection, who is driven by his own inner demons. We are shown a detective who really does work at it

C.TAYLOR-DELAROSA
IF

A BATMAN COMMENTARY by Rick Peterson (continued)

instead of making impossible intuitive leaps. In short, we are made to believe in the Batman as a character.

Mr. Reed is also interested in the vein of the weird and bizarre that runs through the Batman mythos, in fact he seems fascinated by it. No one else comes up with such outrageous situation for the Batman to deal with; or such logical explanations and solutions to them. The two part story in Batman #298 and #299 is a perfect example of this (and incidently the start of a swing back from "villain" to"mystery" stories). The opening is enough to startle even the Batman: "ritual murder...in the depths of Gotham City!" accompanied by weirdly garbed assassins, drugged illegal aliens and a mystery woman. But the Batman proceeds with his usual supreme competence and single-minded determination to unravel the complex web to its strange, but logical, solution. It is curious and indicative of his nature that Reed's Batman doesn't even allow an attempt to expose his secret identity to sidetrack him, until it interferes with his investigation. Then proves able to solve two difficult problems simultaneously, in a plausible fashion and a minimum amount of time. There are a couple of places where Reed takes short cuts (e.g., the radiance effect wearing off so quickly, the "rabid" dogs being chained up) but this is obviously dictated by a lack of space. The Batman could have dealt with these problems if necessary. In fact it is difficult to imagine anything that Reed's Batman couldn't deal with.

It is unfortunate that the artwork does not do justice to David V. Reed's intricate, well-plotted story. The artwork has shown improvement, partly due to Dick Giordano's inks but also due to improvement in John Calnan's pencils. Still the work is stiff and not up to the standard we have come to expect on the Batman. We have quite simply been spoiled in this regard. With Adams, Novick, Aparo, Chan, Robbins and more recently Grell, Simonson, Rogers and Golden doing the artwork we have to expect very high quality work indeed. John Calnan is by no means incompetent; in fact David V. Reed's concentration on the Batman makes for a very straightforward story presentation that suits Calnan's simpler, less detailed style (virtually all his stories follow the Batman through from beginning to end with a minimum of flashbacks, unexpected cuts, etc.) Even so the contrast with the likes of Rogers and Golden can be deadly; throughout I found myself thinking how much more impressive, in fact, truly memorable, this story could have been with better artwork.

Dave had better luck with Batman #300 and the result was indeed a special issue. Although I prefer Dick Giordano's pencils (the originally announced artist), Walt Simonseon's style is well suited to SF theme and he did an effective job, emphasizing the great difference from the present day setting, which was very important to the story.

The story itself is a taut, fast-paced mystery, but with something different. It is an "electronic manhunt" with the machine doing the real work. The Batman is as competent as ever, but he is out of place here. He is driven by very personal demons; what sort of satisfaction can he get out of such impersonalized crimefighting? Walt's artwo drives this point home with the contrast between the dark, menacing Batman and the colorful futuristic scenes. By the time we reach the epilogue we are prepared for the Batman's retirement. Walt's last panel catches the proper mood: a wistful examination of his long career and a sense of apprehension and wonder at a future without the Batman. Fortunately this is a future still far away.

The opening sequence of Batman #301 is, I think, one of David V. Reed's best: the dread Batman whose devastating appearance and chilling ferocity would cow any crook, and whose emotionless shell can still be pierced by the devastating unexpectedness of sudden death. Too bad the rest of the story is such a turkey. The idea of the wi heads, "a hidden...phalanx" of people programmed to avenge any but a natural death o a hitherto undiscovered "Boss of Bosses", is pretty hard to swallow, but I have had experience putting my sense of disbelief in stora when Dave pulls out one of his really weird ones. But then the Batman disappears on vacation and a mysterious stranger appears in town who can cause natural-seeming death by telepathy. Pfui! Any crime boss who wou fall for this is really stupid. Well this particular mobster repeatedly demonstrates his stupidity and when, despite the Batman' best efforts, he guns down the secret "Crim Czar", the Batman is forced to claim the mu and justify the title: "The Only Man Batman Ever Killed."

Now so far it's not really so bad. A little difficult to take seriously, perhaps. But Dave has such a good grasp on the Batma that he's fun to watch in action even when the situation is beyond belief. And now w have the Batman charged with murder and stalked by the wireheads. Surely a situati with plenty of potential for Dave to exploi. Unfortunately it is left unexploited. The issue of a murder charge is glossed over by Commissioner Gordon in a news conference and then ignored. Worse, the attacks of the wireheads are stupid, senseless, and ineffec

A BATMAN COMMENTARY by Rick Peterson
(continued)

I can't see why the crime bosses would be afraid of them if this is the best they can do.

The only good point of the story is his handling of Robin. Dave makes Robin believable as a young man with a brain, competent although not yet the equal of the Batman (he is still played as a dunce too often). The tending scene is funny, with Bruce flying off into the sunrise (!), leaving everyone else bewildered and not knowing what's going on (and leaving a murder charge on the Batman). But one scene doesn't make a story. I feel sorry for the poor Commissioner, whom Dave makes to look so ineffectual. When he takes the time Dave gives an insightful interpretation of Commissioner Gordon, but he rarely takes the time. John Calnan's artwork continues to improve, at least when inked by Dick Giordano (#301 was inked by Tex Blaisdell and wasnot nearly as satisfactory). In fact #302 resembles Dick Giordano's work more than it does John Calnan inked by anyone else. Regardless, this time it was the story that didn't come up to the level of the artwork.

David V. Reed's redeeming virtue is his carefully wrought interpretation of the Batman which shines through all his stories, no matter how bad. Denny O'Neil's one irredeemable fault is the lack of a definite interpretation. He has never come to a satisfactory conclusion as to the Batman's motivation or the nature of the person behind the mask; indeed he seems merely to consider Bruce Wayne as a place for the Batman to rest between adventures. "There is No Hope in Crime Alley" is an exce;tion to this,but there is no carry over to his more recent work. Consequently his version of the Batman seems (to me) shallow and undefined. He has put the Batman in the roles of detective, superhero, "creature of the night"; the latest role seems to be the relentless manhunter. But he doesn't seem somfortable in any of them; they are masks he puts on to cover the void that exists where the character should be.

Despite all of this he can write first rate stories and "The Monstrosity Chase" (Batman Family #18) isone of them. It is quite simply an extended chase scene through the rain-flooded sewers of Gotham City. Denny O'Neil handles the elements of this deftly: the grimly determined Batman, the frightened hostage, the growing terror of the gunmen as they are stalked by an unstoppable nemesis, and finally a race against unexpected death. The result is a gripping, head-long tale that I found highly satisfying. Mike Golden's artwork heightens the nightmarish quality of the story and leaves you feeling that you were down in the sewer with them. The ending feels both appropriate and expected, although the detection seems phoney compared to David V. Reed's better work. There are faults inthe story, but it is so absorbing that they barely get noticed the first time through.

"The Tomb of the White Bat" (Batman Family #19) has all of these errors, with more added on, and no redeeming feature except Mike Golden's artwork. For instance, Denny's dialogue tends to be trite and contrived. In Batman Family #18 it hardly gets noticed, but in #19 it's so bad in places as to be ludicrous. "I won't talk", indeed. I find Denny's Batman stupidly arrogant, putting people down unnecessarily and being smugly certain about things he doesn't know for sure. But the real problem is that the plot is disjointed and illogical. Denny introduces an element of the supernatural without making sense out of it, let alone making it serve the plot. Nor do the hillbillies he throws in. The villain proceeds about his assassination attempt in a completely inefficient and ineffectual fashion, which is very fortunate because the Batman doesn't exactly shine either. The trap he sets, which impresses the Batman so much, is simply dumb. The Batman could easily have come up the hill 5 or even 50 yards to either side. The deathtrap is probably the highlight of the story, as the Batman is forced to think for a change instead of just using brute force; although the result is a little difficult to swallow. My overwhelming impression is that Denny O'Neil didn't give a damn about the story, that he was only interested in whipping it out as quickly as possible. Mike Golden's artwork is impressive, but it would have been nice if he had had a story to illustrate.

My feelings towards Gerry Conway as a writer for the Batman are ambivalent and Batman #295 and Batman Family #16 illustrate why. The first is a good story and the second is a dud; but both contain contradictory elements and a certain lack of logice that can be very irritating. In "The Houdini Whodunit" it is hard to reconcile the Batman who produces an almost supernatural terror in crooks with the Batman who goes palling around with the Mystery Analysts. Not impossible, people are contradictory; but Gerry makes no attempt to do so. Nor is there sufficient justification for Hamton's attack on Kaye Daye and the Batman and it is this and not the original murder that does him in. Furthermore, the Mystery Analysts are brought on stage but not really used; they serve as a collective and slow Watson to the Batman's

A. KUPPERBERG
S. DELAROSA

IF

Holmes. What made this a good story is a very clever gimmick (the disappearing bodies) which was explained just enough to make it believable but not destroy the sense of mystery, Mike Golden's moody artwork and the nostalgic reappearance of a well-loved group ("charging through these corridors like hounds in full cry").

"Scars" (Batman Family #17) had some good scenes, but no framework to hang it on. The basic plot, a maniac running around disfiguring the "beautiful people", is simply ludicrous and is compounded with further inanities (if Mallard had gone broke paying plastic surgeons how could he pay for the equipment to perform his complex operations? And how had he learned enough to perform such drastic plastic surgery from consulting plastic surgeons, if they couldn't even fix his miniscule scar?). The artwork, scratchy and lacking detail, is the worst I've ever seen Jim Aparo do. His work in Brave and Bold has deteriorated somewhat of late, but nothing as poor as this.

On the other hand there are some bright spots. The appearance of the Huntress adds little to the story itself, but it does give the Batman a chance to make a deduction in the purest Holmesian tradition and the impression is never totally dissipated, even by the inane dialogue between the Batman and Mallard. The "deathtrap" which follows is rather different and well-handled, not tacked onto the story as usual. The Batman's escape, also, is well done, a new variation on a very old trick. But it is the Batman who almost casually terrifies a janitor into talking, who deliberately herds Mallard into the House of Mirrors to explose his "deformity" that catches the imagination. This Batman would truly "strike terror into the hearts" of anyone, including crooks. But Gerry Conway seems unsure of what to do with him, and so far his idea of a suitable plot leaves something to be desired. So I look forward to future stories with anticipation, and no little trepidation.

--Rick Peterson

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("In my opinion, Rick is one of the few people in fandom today who has a real grasp on the character and interpretation of the Batman, and I'm glad to have his in-depth analysis appearing here. As to a bio, Rick tells me: 'I am 25, a romantic, and a frustrated writer (I found it was hard work!) who chose instead his second great love, numbers. As a result I am graduate student at UC Berkeley. I expect to complete my PhD in another two years and then I will have to venture out into the real world to make a living, unless I am (shudder) sucked back into the University system as a professor. My interests include sailing, reading history, sf and fantasy, playing war games. Although I read comic books when I was young, my real interest in them started in 1970 when I happened to pick up an issue of Detective.'"-- Bill-Dale)

Here is a line, cut it out and collect the whole set:

GENE PHILLIPS ON

DOORWAY INTO NIGHTMARE 1,2,3

Though comics are not well-known for their subtle handling of horror themes, DOORWAY INTO NIGHTMARE is a good attempt at low-key Gothic horror, or what might be termed true occult romances. Odd to reflect that only DC has been even remotely successful at picking up on EC's transformation of the anthology comic-- especially in view of National's creatively-stagnant stance in those "Birth of the Code" days.

Occult romance is not the worst basis for an anthology series-- considering the other choices, if you must issue comics consisting ov VIctorian boy-girl relations, the presence of occult influences at least steers the emotional course away from broken hearts, copious tears, ad nauseaum.

The pivotal figure in all DOORWAY's storie is a mystery woman named Madame Xanadu, a Tarot-reading "spiritual advisor" who, for private purposes, seeks to shield unwary mortals from the supernatural (which thus far has picked only on young romantically-involved men or women). Less active than the Phantom Stranger, but more so than Cain or Abel, Mada Xanadu usually allows the mystery to develop, and then comes in at the end to put the evil forces to flight.

The scripts are passable but undistinguished-- any one could have been seen on a TV terror-tale; i.e., a girl's lover is being stolen by a witch (Micheline), a girl-scientist becomes possessed (Conway), a girl falls in love with a vampire (Kunkel and McKenzie). Far more attractive is the gloomy, borderline-expressionistic art, executed with fair results by Mayerick, Alcazar, and Estrada/Tanghal.

I persisted in calling the heroines of the previous paragraph "girl" with full aware-- ness of the word's perjorative qualities. They are basically empty vessels of infatuation, as are the men in a more (harrumph) masculine way. The thing that holds the mag together is the WOMAN, Mme. Xanadu, with her Tarot symbolism, her weird mystical artifacts, her subtle performances of magic, and her hints of having lived during times not at a all contemporary. Another character of potential, subsumed by mediocrity-- it does seem to happen more often at DC, but I may be prejudiced.

Anyway, DOORWAY is good for a few tries, though it isn't likely to hold interest for long-- especially when it converts to 50¢, and the mediocrity thickens...

--Gene Phillips

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("Gene has written for Compass and TCJ, amon other zines, and has been with AFTA from the very beginning. At this point, discussion of FIRESTORM is often laced with the obvious parallel between FIRESTORM and NOVA, or FIRESTORM and SPIDER-MAN. But it takes a pro like Gene to point out to all of us, the most obvious parallelism, as he does on the next page..." --Bill-Dale)

MARCINKO NEW EDITOR COMPASS

FLASH! I just found out that there's a good possibility that I may be taking over the editorship of COMPASS, now called PHOENIX. In it, I want to run the comic news, tv, film news, and record news and reviews which I can't run that properly in AFTA, since these things date very quickly (AFTA's third/fourth class delivery takes weeks or months(!)). More details next issue of AFTA, ok?

REVIEW:

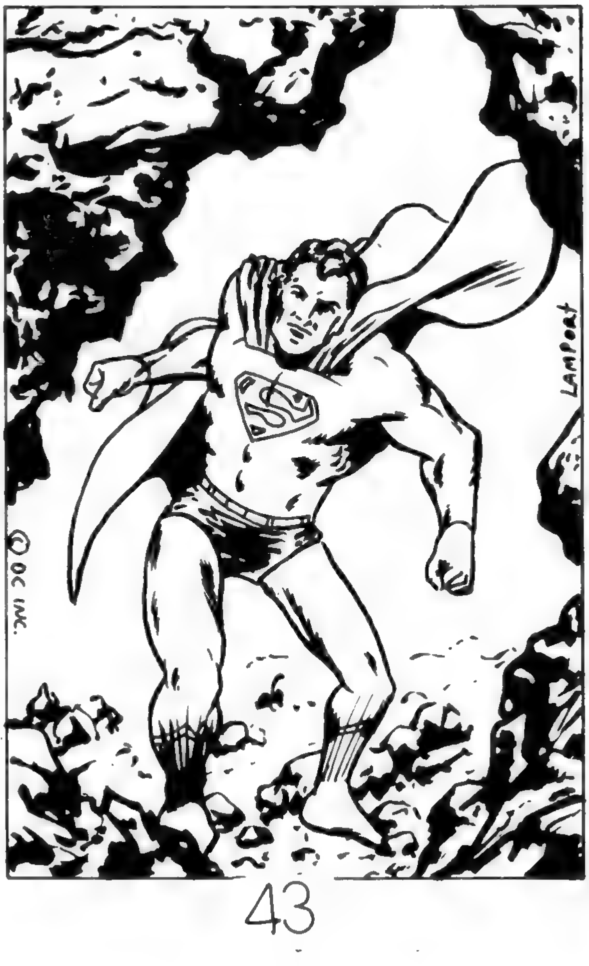
Action 486

This was a pretty dismal contribution to the great continuing saga of the Superman legend, to tell you the truth. The combination of Gerry Conway, George Tuska and Vince Colletta made for a dismal and lumpy showing in the lead story. Lookit: what this is is another time-paradox story, which a friend of mine swore that he wrote the likes of two years ago. But even this isn't all that conclusive of anything; by this time paradox stories are all so formulized that they're all more or less copies of each other, separated by seconds, with no doubt.

Observe: our hero is once again bored. Now if there's one thing that I get invariably bored at is when they get bored. With the extent of their powers they--by which I mean super-heroes--should have no damn reason to get bored. If by some chance they do, I've always seem that they can't have too bright a brain, since they can't seem to rustle up some entertainment for themselves. And the idea that Supie of all super-heroes getting bored is the worst of all. So we are treated to another excursion to the future, which should have been all old hat by now; but ol' Supie goes again. And this time Supie has come so far into the future that the sun has become red! Oh thrills! Now I don't care about the scientific aspects of this at the moment. Let some aspiring young scientist come up with the little details that are wrong that always mark Conway's stories. Anyway, this is another time of war--how long has it been since we've seen a time paradox story in a peaceful setting? Or is it an impossible thing, hm? And of course, Supie's landed in the middle of a skirmish that only he can solve. Ho hum. And it turns out that an old-fashioned computer has been deified--again--and that same little hand-computer will be the world's salvation. Gosh. And so, having saved the world once again--by this time I really must worry about old Supie, someday he'll proclaim himself God, he's saved the world so many times--he goes back to the present, where he finds a space capsule being put under for prosperity, the same one which produced the computer that saved the future world--but Supes has to put the computer where it belongs, since he snitched from the future that very same computer that saved that future world which should be in capsule but isn't! Now is that clear? If it is, step into my office, my dear. I'd like to test you for a few things in that warped little mind of yours. And so we are left with the ages old question of which came first, the present-day computer or the one in the future? By this time, I don't care. I just want some real entertainment.

But you don't get it in the backup. The only people who should enjoy the back-up are people who still enjoy the schmaltz in the world. I mean, anyone who enjoys the idea of Lex Luthor, arch-criminal extraordinaire being a mush at heart probably cried over Beth's death in LITTLE WOMEN--for the fiftieth time. If Elizabeth M. Smith (c'mon, Liz, what does that "M." stand for? Mush?) can write, so can I. Geez. This story was ridiculous. And the idea that Luthor would be such a sweetheart to give himself up after delivering a birthday present to his nephew astounds me. It also makes me gag. The only part of this little filler that I enjoyed was the twist at the end was the revelation that Val, Lex's nephew admired Batman more than Superman. In fact, I liked it so much that it can't be part of the original story. Someone must have put that in, but not smith. In all, this was a pretty silly little story. I recommend it to those who are in the least bit sentimental at heart. And very few others.

--Elizabeth M? Smith



13224 S. "C" Street
Tacoma, WA 98444

("What can I say?"
--Bill-Dale)

THINGS WHICH YOU COULD (ETC.)

NO.3 - A VERY BURNT STEAK

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO THE CLASS OF '41 AND '62? OR **Redhead meets Webhead**

gene phillips

Ha, unsuspecting reader! So you are among those guileless few who still believe that Stan Lee was innovating when he dropped a kid named Peter Parker into high school environs? Listen and learn, gentle neophyte. Without drawing cumbersome, unproveable lines of descent, this essayist-cum-comics-freak shall attempt to reveal a shocking core truth about Marvel's biggest seller-- for which I'd better drop back into formality.

The "redhead" from the title refers to possibly the most unlikely influence on the superhero field: Archie. Before being drowned in moans and groans, I must add a personal caveat: I used to like Archie during my tender years. Oh, I wasn't crazy about it-- it was just another funnybook to be lumped in with the rest. Like the others (including the overworked Disney books), I liked it when a gag or a line struck me funny; I grew up thinking comedy was designed only for the occasional laugh.

Not until I had grown away from funnybooks per se did I eventually perceive Archie on the terms of most comics critics: that Archie was a shallow, repetitious anachronism. What little affection I alloted to Archie perished upon seeing ARCHIE AT RIVERDALE HIGH, an insipid book with a serious, preachy format, in which the banality was thick enough to stuff Jughead with.

What this all boils down to: superheroes in the 40's and '50's concerned themselves with pre-teen moppets and "adults," as if to suggest to the small-fry buyer that, in the magical comics world, adults and kids were equals without distinction, that the transition to adulthood would be swift and glorious. ARCHIE and his ilk, who got started in MLJ's PEP #22, 1941, were probably not original in portraying the antics of teenagers, but it has perpetually convinced a (preteen) public that it was unique. To them content was not important, and still is not-- Archie's popularity lay in acknowledging that there was a period of change between "childhood" and "adulthood", a sort of Peter-Pan-land of innocent dates, farcical sight gags, and petty parental restrictions. It in itself is not a milieu resembling the early high-school years of Peter Parker, but from it come two sources of two Parker conflicts: dating and school-activities. More important, ARCHIE perpetuated certain high-school stereotypes, with an uncanny resemblance to those of Spider Man.

The best example is that both Archie and Peter have two girlfriends of varying backgrounds. Betty Cooper is pretty and middle-class; Betty Brant is pretty, working girl. Veronica Lodge is glamorous and well-to-do; so is Liz Allan. The other two teen figures of SM, Flash Thompson and Peter Parker, are not such direct parallels, but they partake of stereotypes very prominent in Archie. Flash Thompson combines the perpetual nastiness of Reggie Mantle and the physical overbearance of Moose, while Pete Parker is like Archie in terms of uneasy relations with girls and school, with some brains not unlike Dilton Doily.

And now, having set up this whole premise of parallelism, let me now proceed to demolish it. First of all, not only is the creatorship of SM divided between Stan Lee and Steve Ditko, but either man might be unlikely to have intentionally modeled SM on Archie. To be sure, those stereotypes also appeared in another highly-visible medium; movies (though every movie about teens I ever saw usually praised the BMOCs like Thompson.) But, on the other hand, Stan Lee did work on juveniles in his time, and might have been expected to know what sold, and, when SM became a surprise success, to appropriate from a handy source.

This, of course, remains conjecture, and involves only one small facet in Spider-Man's popularity. It is however a facet too often focused on by imitators of SM, such as Marv Wolfman on NOVA and Gerry Conway on FIRESTORM, and so by looking at the whole high-schooler superhero schtick in terms of a heritage from Archie can we come to realize that it is no substitute for innovative writing. Superheros, thanks to Spider-Man, no longer need to be idealized adult-figures with no previous life, but this is due to Lee and Ditko having invested their stereotypes with greater-than-original implications (the intellectual appeal of Parker being far different than Dilton Doily's) Wolfman and Conway do not possess this pioneering ability, and so their efforts are a little above ARCHIE, but not much. And as ARCHIE's innocent farce appeals to a conservative public, one must see NOVA, FIRESTORM, and the bastardized SM in the same damning light. The problems of youth become the pap of writers, and...

And I'm getting as preachy as RIVERDALE HIGH. Which reminds me: if you smoke Archie comics, know what kind of high you get on? A RIVER--

--Gene Phillips

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("Ouch! No more of that, hear?" --Bill-Dale)

NEVILLE+DELAROSA
IF

PSYCHOLOGICAL REALISM IN FIRESTORM

rick howe

Somewhat in the tradition of early issues of SPIDERMAN, the new DC series FIRESTORM (THE NUCLEAR MAN) catches the reader's interest in the first two issues with an interesting cast of characters and continuing subplots on the personal problems of the protagonist in his every-day identity as Ronnie Raymond, high school student. Some great psychological angles are being developed in the new strip, which is edited by Jack C. Harris, written by Gerry Conway, and drawn by Al Milgrom. Conway and Milgrom are named as "co-creators" of the strip.

Whereas Peter Parker's problem was largely a matter of making ends meet, Ronnie Raymond is motivated by an emotional need for acceptance and approval. His only family appears to be his father; his mother is dead. What with "always moving from city to city," the youngster has never known a real friend. His fondest memory, prior to becoming a super-hero, was of being a football hero on the school team. It is possible that Ronnie was subconsciously seeking acceptance and approval through athletic deeds. Then, through a nuclear mishap, he becomes the super-powered "Firestorm"--and this, it seems, should give him many opportunities to show off before the world.

Ronnie Raymond, in other words, is one of those people who tries to impress others in order to make them like him. "I just want them to be proud of me," he thinks. But this is not a good solution to his feeling of insecurity. It is more important that he be able to accept himself.

It is worth noting that Ronnie's emotional problems--loneliness, insecurity, feelings of inferiority--are common in today's society. Many of the characters in this same comic strip have similar problems.

Take Cliff Carmichael, the "class whiz-kid," for example. In class, he always has to be first with the correct answer, which may be interpreted as a seeking of approval. He puts Ronnie down as a "dumb jock" at every opportunity. Cliff acts like an arrogant, conceited fellow--but perhaps he also feels unappreciated? shunted? ignored? (Cliff and Ronnie are rivals for the affection of the same girl, Doreen Day, who attributes Cliff's dislike of Ronnie to "jealousy.")

Psychologically speaking, it appears that Cliff is projecting his own inadequacy onto Ronnie. This being so, it is quite possible that Cliff is actually attracted to Ronnie--and the two could end up being friends.

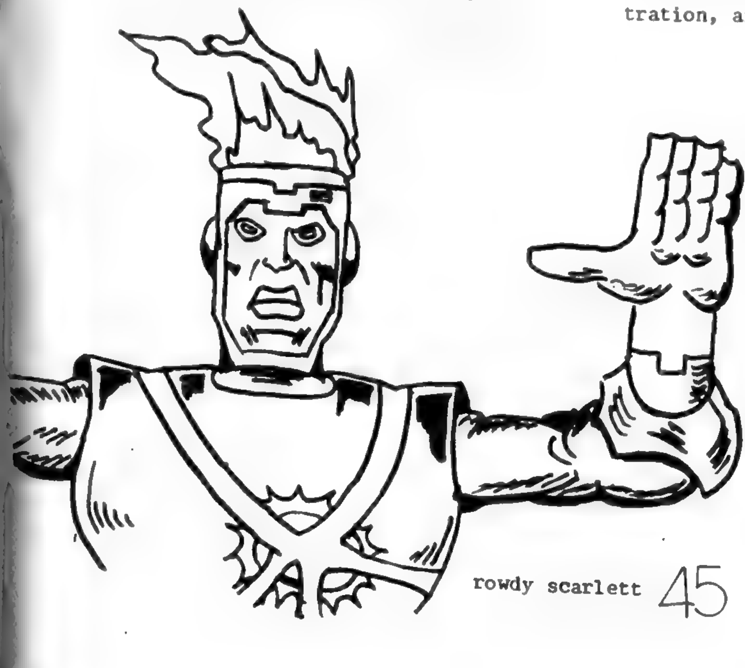
Then there is Eddie Earhart, leader of protest against nuclear energy; his thoughts reveal self-hatred due to feelings of failure and frustration.

How about Danton Black, who, as Multiplex, is the arch-villain of the series? He once worked for Professor Stein, but was fired by him "for stealing equipment." This gives him a grudge against Stein. His allegation that Stein stole the design for his nuclear plant from him without giving him credit is a fabrication. However, its psychological basis could be that Black envies Stein's position, and would like to put himself in the professor's place. Thus, Black is attracted to Professor Stein!

Irrespective of his ties to Professor Stein, Danton Black can best be understood in the light of criminal psychology. He is essentially a greedy man who has no regard for the rights of other people. He is solely concerned with his own personal gratification, and does not recognize limits on either his appetites or on the means he uses to gratify them. Thus, one of the key differences between a man like Martin Stein and a villain like Black is that while the honest man disciplines himself to work through legitimate channels to gain his ends (and accepts restraints on his appetites and deferred gratification of them), the villain tries to take unfair "short-cuts" toward the immediate gratification of his wants. At the basis of criminal appetite we find, of course, the same general kind of emotional needs that other people have. Danton Black can be considered a typical criminal, because he is motivated by commonplace greed; note that he wants to use his super-powers to rob banks.

This brings us to Professor Martin Stein. As a nuclear scientist (Nobel laureate), Stein holds a position of high social status. We expect others to be jealous of him, we do not expect him to experience the same feelings of jealousy, self-doubt, frustration, and insecurity that other people have. He has something that is lacked by some of the characters in the book: a strong self-image or ego. (No doubt it is precisely this that Danton Black--unconsciously--envies in Stein, lacking it in himself; and Black's criminal drives can be seen as compensation for the lack of a healthy ego.) Nonetheless, Martin Stein's behavior can still be interpreted in light of emotional needs, and in the comic book it is presented in this light. For him, it's not a question of needing to impress people; he's not that worried about being accepted. But he still needs a sort of ego-gratification, because he is sustained by his self-image, his sense of being important. If the threat arises that "all my work will have been for...nothing!" -- he begins to come undone.

On the negative side, the psychological traits that correspond



rowdy scarlett

PSYCHOLOGICAL REALISM IN FIRESTORM

by Rick Howe (continued)

to Stein's high school position may be listed as vanity, arrogance, narrow-mindedness (all unacknowneldged by him.) Stein is absolutely certain nothing can go wrong with his "fully automated fail-safe nuclear generating plant" and has no tolerance for the misgivings that other people might have. And no allowance is made in his grandiose plans for the vicissitudes of politics and crime. Danton Black obtains--under false pretexts, of course--an injunction closing down the plant? To hell with it! Bashing his fist against the wall, Stein decides to start the machine anyway, whether anyone else likes it or not. (Thus, the motif of emotional need is shown even in him.) Next thing you know, we got crooks breaking in and out of the facility at will, shooting off dynamite, breaking down walls, etc.--so just how fail-safe can it be?

The opposing views on nuclear proliferation held by Martin Stein and Eddie Earhart reflect their different mental characteristics. Just as Stein's mentality is appropriate to his high social status, Eddie Earhart's subjective lowliness corresponds to his objective milieu. His opposition to nuclear energy is possibly a projection of his own feelings of personal worthlessness. His pessimism seems like a much-needed palliative to Stein's unbridled confidence. However, a psychology based, like Earhart's,on defeatism and destructiveness can never lead to emotional well-being.

Of necessity, both Danton Black and Eddie Earhart are dissemblers' they put forth a facade of righteousness in order to conceal their real villainy. However, such "seeking of approval" is not necessarily the result of deeply-felt emotional needs!

This comic book deserves praise for its sensitive handling of emotional themes. It seems to recognize that feelings of anxiety, loneliness, inferiority and envy are common. As an ethical problem, the issue is over good and bad ways of responding to emotional needs.

Ronnie Raymond, while making some more or less innocent mistakes, will, we think, illustrate constructive ways of acknowledging and coping with his problems. Now, admittedly, he is given some pretty great advantages. If his father is benevolently negligent of the boy's emotional needs, he has the school principal on the verge of taking a special interest in him. More importantly, he has Doreen to bolster him and offer sound advice. Ronnie's problem, to a large extent, boils down to basic loneliness; we see no signs, Cliff Carmichael notwithstanding, that Ronnie is not accepted among his peers. (We have some friends who would say: "Take away his girl friend, take away his football prowess, and make the principal inimicable to him--then show us how he copes with emotional stress! Oh, and take away his super-powers too; if we were ever caught in a nuclear explosion, with our luck we'd be left crippled and deformed--at best! And this kid emerges as a candidate for the Justice League of America! Jeez!" Well, you cynics!)

Superman, who appears in the second story, provides an excellent role-model for the novice Firestorm; he is well-adjusted and self-assured, and ready to admit that "everyone makes mistakes." Professor Stein, on the other hand, seems to think he is infallible. (And we have doubts about his future emotional stability.)

Cliff Carmichael shows a wrong response: he puts other people down, while failing to acknowledge his own insecurity.

Eddie Earhart and Danton Black, of course, have become villains. Eddie, however, is not an every-day crook, but a misdirected radical; that is, he is not motivated by simple individual greed. So we do not consider Eddie Earhart--or Cliff Carmichael--to be irredeemable. All it takes is some consideration of their feelings, too!

If society must elevate some men to positions of high prestige and influence, while casting others down, anyone can guess what the emotional repercussions will be! A satifying solution can only be conceived of in terms of balance and compromise. To build up one person's ego at the expense of another's is not a true solution! What we would like to see is a general equilibrium, to be reached through organic interaction, showing some fairness and consideration toward all parties. Of course, perfect equality is impossible, and it would be naive and unrealistic to dream of a society without anxiety and loneliness.

("Wanna bet?" --Bill-Dale)

Ronnie's father is a little like Professor Stein--slightly insensitive to the needs of others around him. We'll have to see more of Mr. Raymond and Dr. Hapgood, the principal, in order to understand them in depth. At present, they seem a little like stock characters, going through their roles in a mechanical fashion. At present, though, we also see Doreen as a somewhat mechanical character. The question with her is, will she be a three-dimensional character in her own right, or only a stage-prop for Ronnie and Cliff? Also, is she phony or sincere? Doreen is a crucial character in the book, and we expect a lot of development in her and around her; and obviously she can't be the only female in the book for long. (Maybe we should be asking: is Ronnie the only 3D character--the only one that matters--or can there be others? And how many others?)

The book has a good cast of characters, and there is great dramatic potential in their interaction-- especially, their emotional interaction. FIRESTORM could be better than SPIDERMAN. The key will be to focus on emotions in the same way that the first two issues do, without distorting them under the pressure of excessively melodramatic circumstances. Peter Parker's problems were mostly circumstantial, and did not necessarily reveal his character. He had the trick of putting things to the back of his mind in order to attend another urgent matter. In its own way Spiderman showed a lot of psychological realism, but the approach in FIRESTORM is leading toward a subtler variety of emotions and may work out in conjunction with a deeper or more basic psychology.

And somewhere along the line, the emphasis in SPIDERMAN shifted toward exaggerated non stop acrobatic violence that bordered on slapstick. This would have to be cut out of any comic that was meant to be taken seriously.

NO. 4 -
→
MURRAY'S BRAIN

IT AIN'T HEAVY, IT'S A FRENCH COMIC BOOK

jim bertges

("This article is in two parts. And it is my fault. Jim first wrote the first piece you will read for me in August of last year. AFTA was delayed, and by the time February rolled around, the piece was ancient. So Jim wrote a little "addendum" to it. I have printed them now, and thankfully, even in the right order. Jim?"

--Bill-Dale)

A prefatory note--

The following jumble of words, thoughts and phrases are my opinion. Although they may be stated as if they were absolute fact, they are not. They are opinion. There is a difference. They are what I believe and no one else has to put any import on them unless he sees some truth there that has meaning to him. In other words, it's your privilege to believe my opinions are full of shit, just as it is my privilege to believe the same about you.

Shall we begin...

Comics is (are? am?) primarily a visual medium, so most of us, being children and/or disciples of the Great God, Television are attracted mainly by the pretty pictures. Images, artwork, those are the grabbers. They are what initially make us plunk down our money and walk off with an armload of fantasy. But...(you had to know there was going to be a but in there somewhere)... in a story telling medium such as comics, images aren't everything, although they can be.

The ultimate, the perfect comic story, like the perfect film, would be completely visual. Panels would flow into panels, scenes into scenes with no reliance on language. In any case, language should not be a barrier in the comic story. The writers of comics must depend upon the visual aspect of the medium to convey their story,not the written word. Too many words linked to he pictures clog the flow and bog down the plot. So, the writer can use symbols to make his meaning clear without cluttering up our minds with a lot of wordage. But, and this is the point I've been leading up to all along, the symbols most writers in comics use are too personal or vague to be of any meaning to us, the average, dumbell reader.

As I have said, we are first grabbed by the images in a story as a visual treat. The ads we see for comics and fanzines depend upon pieces of splashy artwork and interesting illoes to sell their wares. Covers are made to be grabbers, getting the flashiest art out front. And generally we fall for it. We go for the impressive visuals without noticing whether the story is up to par with them. Sometimes they are; sometimes they aren't. It's a chance we have to take. We buy what we think we'll like based on the information available. Thankfully, there's a lot of good stuff out there both visually and conceptually and we aren't always disappointed (like I make it sound). More often than not, we like what we find and everyone goes on producing.

Now, in answer to the question, "What the hell is this guy leading up to, anyway?" I offer the following.

For the past few years, attending conventions, visiting bookshops and buying through the mail, I've noticed the beautiful looking European books and magazines. METAL HURLANT, LT. BLUEBERRY, DURANGO et al, look so lovely I found myself saying over and over, "God, I wish I could read French!" I'd flip through them, believing that I could follow the story through the visuals, but I'd be disappointed. They didn't make much sense without the translation of those weird looking words. So, back on the shelf the book would go, and I'd swear that I'd learn the language, sometime.

Then a friend called and asked if I'd seen the latest National Lampoon. Since I'd given the magazine up when I was inexplicably striken with taste (and low funds), I answered no. He told me that there was a color insert for a new comic that NatLampCo was doing called HEAVY METAL, and that I might be interested. So, at my next stop at a magazine stand, I picked up a copy and thumbed through it, ignoring the poor attempts at humor, and found the insert. It looked very nice. The artists were impressive, Corben, Bode, Druillet, Moebius. And what could be seen of the stories offered (only one page of each) didn't look too bad. But what caught my eye was a line in their ad copy about European comics writers eliminating "cuteness" from their work. "No cuteness," I thought...no fake twist ending that everyone has seen a hundred times; no cardboard characters and characterizations; no stupid jokes in the dialogue that had no meaning in the story; no wise cracks. I was impressed.

I was suckered in by pretty pictures and promises!

When I bought the first issue of HEAVY METAL, I was disappointed. Most of the art was nice, some was below my expectations, but all-in-all it was passable. And, I suppose the promises weren't broken. I didn't see any "typical" American type characters or stories. Yes, I know that Corben and Bode' are American artists, but they are far from typical. My main disappointment was caused by the question I asked at the end of many of the stories, "What?" (Or better, "HUH?").

In the "Conquering Armies" story I didn't know what really happened or why. At this time there have been five issues of HEAVY METAL and four "Conquering Armies" stories. They seem to become more intelligible as they progress.

"The Adventures of Yriss" promised a lot more in the first installment than it delivered in the second. The story just petered out to a dull ending (that is a complaint which pertains to many of the continued stories throughout the five issues.)

"Selenia"was just plain silly.

"Traumwach" was an exercise in jumbled meaninglessness. I didn't care much for the art either. And where did that "hideous mechanical creature" come from?

"1996" and "Age of Ages" I found were just wastes of my time.

And the final story, "Manipulation", was so vague as to be meaningless.

IT AIN'T HEAVY, IT'S A FRENCH COMIC BOOK
by Jim Bertges (continued)

That was what I didn't like about the first issue.

Surprisingly enough, I did find some positive aspects in the first issue. "Den" by Richard Corben, and "Sunpot" by the late Vaughn Bode' were high points, even though I'd seen them before elsewhere.

"Space Punks" was beautifully drawn and fun to read. It was reminiscent of Heinlein's STARSHIP TROOPERS. Whether or not it was a satire of the Heinlein novel, I don't know, but I enjoyed it. It also made its point.

And then there was "Arzach" by Moebius. This series, although the titles changes confusingly from "Arzach" to "Harzach" (for what it matters), is the high point of HEAVY METAL. The stories are simply, but expertly crafted. They can be read and reread without any loss of wonder. The story flows beautifully from panel to panel without a written word. Needless to say, I am impressed by Moebius.

But even Moebius and his beautiful work, along with the other good points of the magazine do not overshadow the disappointment I felt in it. I suppose I expected a lot more than I got. My expectations for those stories I couldn't read were too high. And I was suckered by a bunch of pretty pictures and slick ad copy. So, my disappointment may just be as much with myself as with HEAVY METAL.

At any rate, the magazine seems to be improving. It is still littered with vague tales where the writers depend upon personal symbols too much to communicate with a wide audience. But the high points are becoming more frequent. The continuing "World Apart" story and Corben's "Den" are worth the purchase price by themselves. So, as you may have gathered, I'll continue to buy it until I've become totally disgusted (in the current issue, August '77, I found more stories that I didn't like than the ones I did). Maybe we'll get luck and HEAVY METAL will become a showcase for the kind of stuff that Marvel and DC won't touch, and give us the best of the Europeans as well. I hope.

To end on a postive note, though; HEAVY METAL is a step in the right direction if we expect the art of comics to survive. With prices rising for individual comics, and for printing along with dropping page count and quality, someone has to explore the alternatives to traditional comic publishing. HEAVY METAL is one of those alternatives, not the only one (thank God) but if it works, maybe others will experiment, too. And maybe, just maybe somebody will produce comics that are worth their cover price for a change!

("And then, eight months passed...")

addendum

Well, it's been a year now (not a year since I wrote It Ain't Heavy etc., but a year since HEAVY METAL began publication) and as much as I tried to end on an upbeat note in my last piece, hoping that the future would bring improvement and comprehendability to HM, I'm afraid I was wrong. There hasn't been any change at all in HEAVY METAL. That is, there have been no substantial improvements in quality, nor have there been losses in quality either.

I think Gil Kane best summer up what I'm trying to say about HEAVY METAL in a recent interview when he said, "the writing in today's comics is "inconsequential."" He wasn't speaking specifically about HM, but that is the point I'm trying to make. The care and craft in HM is lavished onto the artwork while the plots and characterizations are left vague and meaningless. The term "inconsequential" spells it out perfectly.

It's probably best to take a look over the content of HM's first year and point out the highs and lows it held for me.

Den--Richard Corben's DEN was one of the main reasons I continued to purchase HEAVY METAL every month. That is not to say that it was the best work in the magazine, or that DEN could be the sole cause of HM's or any magazine's success or failure. I just like Corben's stuff! DEN has been the lead feature in every issue of HM since #1 and it has led me on an interesting, although simple quest, concerning the battle between evil and evil with a good guy caught in the middle. The story was entertaining, but the many installments made it a bit hard to follow. I'm constantly amazed by Corben's color work and his creation of texture with line and color. I'm looking forward to reading the complete story again, without month-long interruptions, to see if it does hold up an an entertainment. One thing, though, how in the hell do the women in Corben's comics manage to stand up straight? Are those tits actually filled with helium?

Druillet--Druillet is an interesting artist, enjoyable in small doses, but with the massive amounts of his work appearing regularly in HM, it is easy to become bored with his style and his story telling philosophy. His craggy, long faced, dried out characters begin to look alike before long. His detailed pen and ink work is soon transformed by the eyes in a jumble of lines and blotches. His stories seem to emphasize the same sort of pointless existentialism over and over, and about halfway through, I begin wondering why I even bothered starting to read them in the first place. He is clever and inventive, I'll give him that, but I could go for another entire year without seeing another Druillet story and not feel like I've missed anything.

Moebius--Moebius on the other hand, continues to excite me. And, according to the editors, he is the most popular artist in the magazine. One recent story I particularly enjoyed was his "Free Fall". It

IT AIN'T HEAVY, IT'S A FRENCH COMIC BOOK
by Jim Bertges (continued)

showed me the ultimate extension of that damned falling dream we all have. I always wake up and never find out what happens when I land. Moebius told me. The black and white artwork was perfect for that story, it didn't need color.

On the other hand, I can't stand "The Airtight Garage Of Jerry Cornelius". It looks like another vague continued story that you won't be able to make head or tail of until it's all over and you can read it all at once (and maybe not even then). Moebius' work goes about 50/50. Half I like and half I don't. Some of it can be blamed on the writer. Such as in "The Long Tomorrow" by Dan O'Bannon. The rest I'll have to blame on Moebius. Like "The Airtight Garage...". But regardless of the story, his artwork remains brilliant.

Orion--Gray Morrow's"Orion" is another treat. I've been waiting to see more of this since my first glimpse in a fanzine a few years ago. It was worth the wait.

Everything else--Nearly everything else that has appeared in HM, I could do without. "Roger" the photo strip with a Big Jim doll as a hero was as dull as high school philosophy class. "Barbarella" will take some getting used to, but maybe she'll grow on me. "Polonius" was a jumble of sex, torture, death and decay, we don't need anymore of that (well, maybe sex). There has been some amazing color work by Nicollet, and the stories were pretty decent, too (well, there's another high point I forgot to mention). That's about all that sticks in my mind about the comic stories that make up the majority of the magazine, but there are other things to talk about.

Rick McCollum 1975
+ MACHLAN
IF

Every month, HM includes a prose piece by a prominent Science Fiction author, Harlan Ellison, Richard Lupoff, Roger Zelazny and Robert E. Howard have all appeared. I thank the editors for that small favor. Since their magazine has a fairly wide audience, these stories may reach someone who has not been intiated into the readership of Science Fiction and this small exposure may whet their appetite for more. That's the way to keep the genre alive and growing!

We are also exposed to a letter column every month. There are several things that pop up with regularity in the letter column. One is a letter complaining that the magazine is "too EUropean" for an American audience. These are usually put down by the editors with a response of:

> So sure. Will you sign our petition to get all Europeans, Rembrandt, Picasso, et al out of our museums? How can we respect a people whose mothers let our fathers fuck 'em for Hershey bars after the war, anyway?

It is not that the magazine is too European, it's just incomprehensible for the most part. And the editors, like true intellectuals, try to make anyone who doesn't understand what they think they understand feel like an asshole. The second thing that has been coming up lately is the fact that the people who believe they understand the stories must read the magazine on "true mind-blowi acid". Yeah sure. Take whatever you want, but don't tell me that you can understand anything better while you're tripping. Finally, every couple months-or-so, the editors like to remind us that Vaughn Bode' is dead. Jesus! It's been almost three years now, I think we all know! Please print more of his work, but we don't need a constant reminder of his loss. Maybe we'd be better off without a letter column.

So, after a whole year of publication, what have we got? No improvement. Some good stories. A good amount of really fine art. Lotsa bullshit. Vaguesness. Sillyness. Lack of comprehension. Too many bad stories. And questions. Is it worth the time and money to buy every issue of HEAVY METAL? It is not. From now on, I'll check out each issue carefully before I buy it. I've got a feeling that I'm gonna leave a lot of them on the shelf.

DRAGONSLAYING SAYINGS

A COLUMN BY MARGARET O'CONNELL

Spider-Woman. Ms. Marvel. Power Girl. The Huntress. Darkstar. The Harlequin. Death-Bird. The Golden Glider. Killer Frost. They've all made their first appearances within the last two years. Now think of all the old heroines and villainesses who've been revived lately. Madam Masque, Katma Tui, Tigra, Polaris, and Star Sapphire, to name a few. And now they've even got a third woman in the JLA. As far as women are concerned, this is the Golden Age of comics, right?

Wrong.

True, women are getting a lot more exposure (no pun intended, though with some of the costumes they wear...) in comics now than they ever have before. And in most cases, the writers pay lip service - or a lot more - to feminist ideas and changing attitudes toward women's role. But an awful lot of the time, they wind up falling flat on their faces.

Let's take the two big companies' flagship superheroines, Wonder Woman and Ms. Marvel (Sorry, Frank, but Red Sonja is not a super-heroine in the strick sense of the word. As for all you Cat fans, that trial balloon sank - undeservedly, but it sand nonetheless.)

Each of these two is the result of a conscious effort on the company's part to introduce a female superhero in her own book. In Ms. Marvel's case, she's the first of several such attempts, including the aforementioned Cat, to be successful enough to still be in existence today (though from what I've heard about her sales, someone at Marvel must have a real ideological commitment).

Both heroines are also expressly identified as being the living embodiment of feminist ideals. Wonder Woman is an Amazon who went around advising crestfallen villains' molls not to be dependent on their men and saying things like, "Every woman can be a Wonder Woman," even in the 1950's and '50's. Ms. Marvel's intended feminist significance is obvious from her very name, and there seems to have been a concerted effort to package her as Marvel's answer to Wonder Woman, who had already begun to get publicity specifically as a symbol of the women's movement, thanks to the Ms./Gloria Steinem book of her Golden Age adventures. There had also been several successful Wonder Woman TV movies by the time Marvel re-entered the solo superheroine contest, which probably helped inspire the Marvel masterminds.

However, the way these supposedly feminist-by-definition heroines have been handled lately is unlikely to inspire anyone with much confidence in female intelligence, much less feminist ideals. To put it bluntly, their scripts are a mess. This is in large part the result of writers (a) mistaking sloganeering for substance, and (b) apparently being so overcome with self-consciousness at the thought of writing a female character- and a Significan Female Character, at that- that they lose most of their common sense and frantically throw in some of the most ridiculous plot devices known to comicdom.

Take Wonder Woman - and you may; I'm so sick of her at this point that I wish she'd go back to Paradise Island and stay there. In Superman vs. Wonder Woman, Gerry Conway's portrayal of her conformed exactly to what Marilyn Bethke has accurately labeled the stereotype of "the libber." Wonder Woman spent most of her time in this book denouncing men's childishness and "natural" fondness for war. Conway, who evidently thinks he's a feminist, judging by the politically "correct" statements he puts in the mouth of every heroine he can get his hands on, here falls into the familiar trap of confusing being liberated with hating - or at least despising - men.

There is some precedent for this in Wonder Woman's case. She spouts "you men and your silly wars" type dialogue in many stories from the early days and even the early seventies. Howe ver, this is largely traceable to William Moulton Marston's original conception of the character as the perfect heroine simply because as a female, she embodied love, rather than the macho violence he thought came naturally to men. Well, the time for such easy dichotomies is past, if indeed there ever was a time for them. At least Marston and WW's other previous writers usually confined themselves to having her make just one or two slighting remarks about the male sex per story, instead of indulging in the verbal overkill Conway falls prey to here.

The Wonder Woman Spectacular also had its share of anti-male rhetoric, though somewhat less than Superman vs. Wonder Woman. Unfortunately, not content with this, writer Jack C. Harris and his team of four artists compounded the error with a lot of skin shots of well-endowed Amazons and some dialogue that made one wonder if the inhabitants of Paradise Island were not nobly chaste, but sado-macochistically perverse. A splash page of the view from Queen Hippolyte's palace that prominently features several sexy-looking guards wearing breastplates, armored crotchpieces that barely cover the pubic hair, and strategically placed red draperies suspended from their belts in the rear is not my idea of what is appropriate in a comic featuring the first feminist superheroine.

The next page is even worse. The Amazons training for combat here are somewhat more fully clothed, though the shoulder straps of their Greek-style tunics have a tendency to fall down as far as the Code permits, but the page is basically bondage art, and the trainees are being urged on by another scantily-armored soldier who is evidently turned on by the sight of young women straining against elaborately-tied ropes. You might blame all this on the artist, but the words Harris puts in the armored instructor's mouth reinforce the impression. "Struggle, my pretties!! Break the bonds that hold you!" she cries gleefully. All sexual innuendoes aside, have you ever heard of a drill sergeant who would call raw recruits anything as approving as "my pretties"?

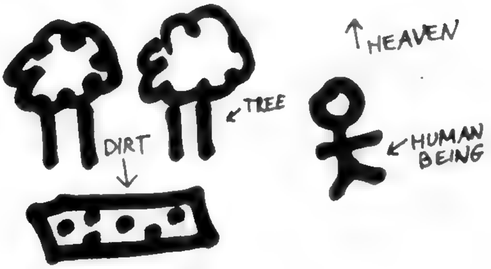
Then in regular Wonder Woman comic we've had a peculiar leaping villain who turned to crime because he hated society women like his mother, plus a Steve Trevor who never speaks to lovesick Yeoman Prince except to bark icy orders. Leaving World War II behind at last can't help but improve this comic, but by this time I'm too tired of its endless intelligence-insulting nonsense to care.

AFTA READER— HERE IS YOUR FREE RAISIN ↘

THIS PAGE WAS BROUGHT
TO YOU BY MR. CLAVELL
SPIM, THE RAISIN KING.

USE IT WELL BY PLANTING YOUR OWN RAISIN PATCH. HERE'S HOW—

Diagram A



Directions:

(1) Go out back and find a plot of dirt or other porous substance (Foam rubber "pits" work fine). See Diagram A.

(2) Dig up shrubbery if you have to. Don't tell Mom.

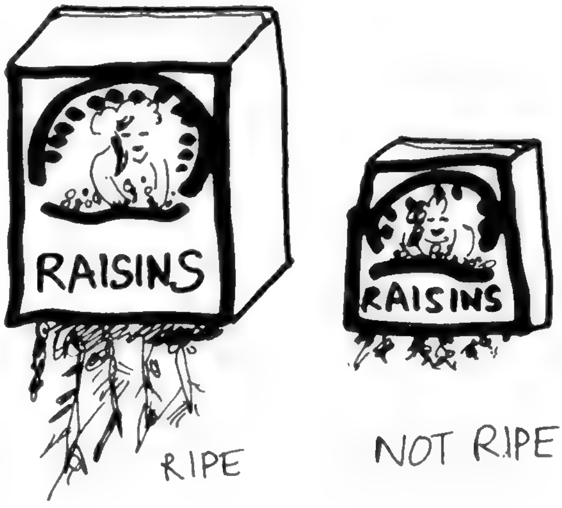
(3) Put the raisin 6 (six) feet deep in the dirt (see #1 or Diagram A for all about 'dirt'). Pack firmly by jumping up and down or driving a jeep over it.

(4) Come back 3 months later, and you will find that one raisin has multiplied into 2-3 dozen clumps of raisin, called "boxes".

(5) The raisin boxes aren't 'ripe' until they reach the size of Diagram B. Check the roots. Are they well developed?

(6) The raisins can now be served individually, or in their original boxes, raw or cooked (this by boiling for 5-10 minutes). Yum yum.

B



DRAGONSLAYING SAYINGS (continued)

by Margaret O'Connell

Ms. Marvel's situation is worse, if anything. At least people with good memories can comfort themselves with the thought that Wonder Woman had some good scripts once. Ms. Marvel never has, except for her guest-shot in Marvel Team-Up . For some reason this worked amazingly well, despite the fact that, like Ms. Marvel itself, it was written by Chris Claremont, who seems unable to do anything very convincing with the character in her own comics

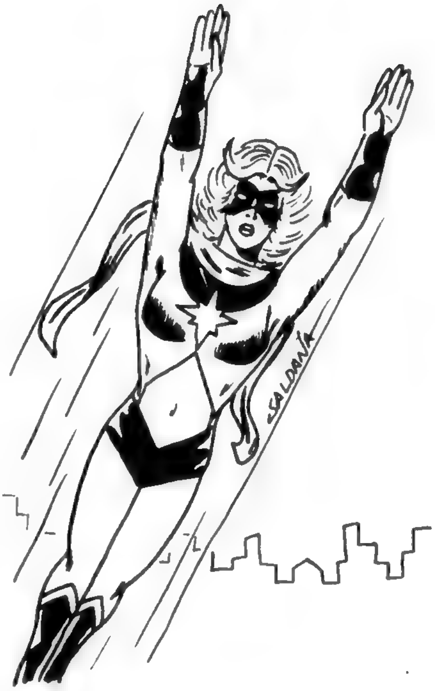
To be fair, Claremont inherited a mess when he took over from Conway in Ms. M #3. Unlike most people, I liked the first issue, at least the parts where Carol Danvers tells off J. Jonah Jameson. Upon closer examination, however, it's evident that the basic situation Conway has set up just won't work - which, naturally enough, is the cause of most of Claremont's later problems.

Conway is a notoriously derivative writer, to put it mildly. Thus, Ms. Marvel's origin is an incredible mishmash of the origins of Supergirl, the Hulk, and even Batman.

Like Supergirl, Ms. Marvel is a spin-off from a male character with a similar name. This was Conway's first and biggest mistake. The experience of Supergirl herself, not to mention the platoon of other spin-off superheroines who never even got a chance at their own books, like Batwoman, Bat-Girl, the current Batgirl (Batman Family is a success because she's teamed with Robin - you can be sure the people who make the decisions think, so, anyway), and Sub-Marinter's cousing Namorita, proves that such characters never escape the male "original's" shadow, and have only limited success in developing their own separate audience. Whatever their individual merits, spin-off characters are always seen by most people as pale imitations of "the real thing" - i.e., Superman, Batman, etc. - and/or blatent attempts to cash in on established hero's popularity. This last charge is probably true, though it doesn't stop some spin-offs from becoming good characters in their own right. Unfortunately, most people are so convinced that the money motives for spin-off characters' existence ensure that said characters will always remain total rip-offs that they never give them a chance to become anything else.

As if this weren't enough, spin-off superheroines have another big problem. Since the heroes they were spun off from were created with no thought in mind that someday the company might like to come up with another character like this one, the spin-offs' origins are usually of necessity so contrived that they leave all but the initiated totally baffled by their very existence.

Supergirl is a classic example of this. Since Siegel and Schuster had thoughtlessly destroyed Krypton in Superman's origin story, there was no way of justifying the sudden appearance of his much younger female cousin 22 years later except by the improbable expedient of having Argo City survive the explosion of Krypton intact and then conveniently be destroyed itself some 16 years later. This is so complicated and unbelievable that the whole origin has to be recapped at least once a year in Superman Family for the benefit of baffled newcomers. It is probably also one of the major reasons why Supergirl will not appear in the multimillion dollar Superman movie, while Krypto will. His origin is contrived, too, but at least it can be easily changed without having to explain away awkward facts like a birthdate that postdates the destruction of Krypton.



Ms. Marvel's birthdate is no problem, but everything else about her origin is even more complex and incredible than Supergirl's. In a misguided attempt at continuity, Gerry Conway decided that Ms. Marvel should be "born" by subjecting some woman who had already figured in Captain Marvel's life to one of those unlikely accidents that endow the victim with super powers. Unfortunately, the woman he selected happened to be named Carol Danvers, which made her sound like a spin-off of Linda (Supergirl) Danvers, as well as the Kree Captain.

To make matters worse, instead of just changing her atomic structure enough to give her super powers, as such accidents usually do, the explosion of the Kree psyche-magnitron during a battle between Captain Marvel and Colonel Yon-Rogg provided Carol Danvers with a second personality with complete Kree training and instincts, but no knowledge of the original Carol Danvers, plus a Kree battle uniform with a "sophisticated electronic webbing" that generates "an energy field capable of withstanding the Destructor's tachyon beam" and enables her to fly. Smart little machine, that exploding psyche-magnitron

Actually, part of this improbable mess may be Chris Claremont's fault. The details about the powers providing costume weren't revealed until Ms. Marvels #5 and 7, several issues after he'd taken over. However, it's hard to believe that someone who is usually as good a writer as Claremont would deliberately invent anything this stupid and troublesome, especially since he promptly proceeds to get rid of it. In Ms. Marvel #7, our heroine, temporarily stripped of her costume, discovers that "somehow, when I caught my second radiation blast from the psyche-magnitron (in Ms. M #4), it transferred most of the costume's powers to my body!" As I said, that's one smart little machine.

Compared to this purposeless tangle, the other flaws in Conway's concept of the character pale to insignificance. But they manage to cause more than their share of difficulties. Take that Central Park penthouse of Carol's, for instance - a blatently obvious steal from

DRAGONSLAYING SAYINGS (continued)
by Margaret O'Connell

Bruce (Batman) Wayne. In this context, it doesn't even make sense. Wayne is a millionaire, but Carol is a freelance writer who's only just been hired as editor of "Woman" magazine, which surely doesn't pay a notably princely sum, as she admits herself in the first issue. But this doesn't faze her for so much as a moment. Asked (by Mary Jane Watson!) how she affords such expensive digs, Carol airily replies, "Royalties from my first book - about the space industry." One wonders where Conway has been for the past few years. Can he really be unaware that even NASA is having money problems since the public's initial euphoria over the moon shots turned to boredom? No book about the space industry is going to make that kind of money. Fortunately, Claremont was not blind to this. In fact, he was so embarrassed by the ineptly-explained penthouse that in Ms. Marvel #9 he burned it down.

J. Jonah Jameson was not so easily gotten rid of. Let's face it - that first issue confrontation between arch-MCP Jameson and prospective "Woman" editor Carol Danvers may be every feminist's fantasy come true, but in real life, anyone who rejected her traditionally-minded employer's recommendations about the direction the new magazine should take with a blunt, "As far as diets and fashions go - forget it," would be looking for a new job in no time flat.

Constant confrontations with a supporting character who really belongs to another hero not being his style, Claremont tried to avoid the Jameson problem in issues #3-4 and 7-14 by having Ms. Marvel override Carol's attempts to get to the office so many times that it begins to seem as if she hadn't put in a full day's work since she was hired. Unbelievably, Jameson never even seems to notice that his new editor comes in late and constantly disappears at odd hours of the day, only to return a week later (although rumor has it that someday soon he will, with fatal results for Carol's job).

Then there's Michael Barnett, Carol's psychiatrist boyfriend, who actually discovered her secret identity before she did, again thanks to Gerry Conway. A superheroine in love with her shrink is not exactly the world's most promising situation, so I can hardly blame Claremont for ignoring Barnett for issues at a time. In fact, I've heard that he's actually planning to kill him off.

When he does use him, the results are simply ludicrous. When I opened Ms. M #15 and discovered our heroine casually dropping in on Barnett, in costume, in order to have a pizza at a local restaurant, I had to check to make sure I wasn't hold a copy of MAD. If Claremont didn't actually intend this scene as self-parody, he needs Barnett's help more than Ms. Marvel does.

Of course, some variation of the Barnett problem was probably inevitable, since comic writers have yet to discover any sensible way of handling the relationship between a woman with high-powered super-abilities, especially super-strength, and a man who is merely human. Again, Supergirl is the classic example. She went through boyfriend after boyfriend, especially in the early stories, but her powers were so overwhelming that DC couldn't seem to convince itself that even Brainiac 5 was a match for her. In fact, they seem to have given up on Supergirl's love life entirely ever since she moved into Superman Family.

Fortunately, not all comic heroines are as thoroughly caught in the web of misguided attempts at feminism as the two who DC and Marvel have tried to make into symbols of the women's movement. In fact, some, like Claremont's own Misty Knight and Colleen Wing, of Iron Fist and, to a slightly lesser extent, Phoenix and Storm of the X-Men, are outstanding examples of real liberation, the kind that's revealed through actions, not high-sounding words that are often ludicrously inconsistent with the character's own behavior (see Ms. Marvel's hysterical clinging to her shrink/lover in her second issue - Conway's last). But since characters like this can only be produced by someone who has already got past the stage of thinking about feminism means nothing more than putting identical pro-liberation platitudes in the mouths of all female characters, regardless of the character's individual situation or personality, it looks as if truly feminist superheroines are going to remain a rarity in the comics industry for the forseeable future.

--Margaret O' Connell

19 Stuyvesant Oval, New York, NY 10009

("Margaret's column sort of introduces the SEXISM IN COMICS survey, which begins on the next page. For those of you who are interested in reading further on WOMEN IN COMICS, please pick up Marilyn Bethke's catalog/zine SEDUCTION OF THE INNOCENT, which has an interview with Jenette Kahn, Chris Claremont (conducted by none other than Margaret O'Connell), the complete Red Sonja letters (in which she's rips into AFTA #1's Sexism and Red Sonja), artwork, fiction, with a special portfolio of superheroes drawn by Joe Staton. For $1.00 from Marilyn's excellent bookstore or by mail at 146 Witherspoon, Princeton, NJ 08540 --tell her I sent you." --Bill-Dale)

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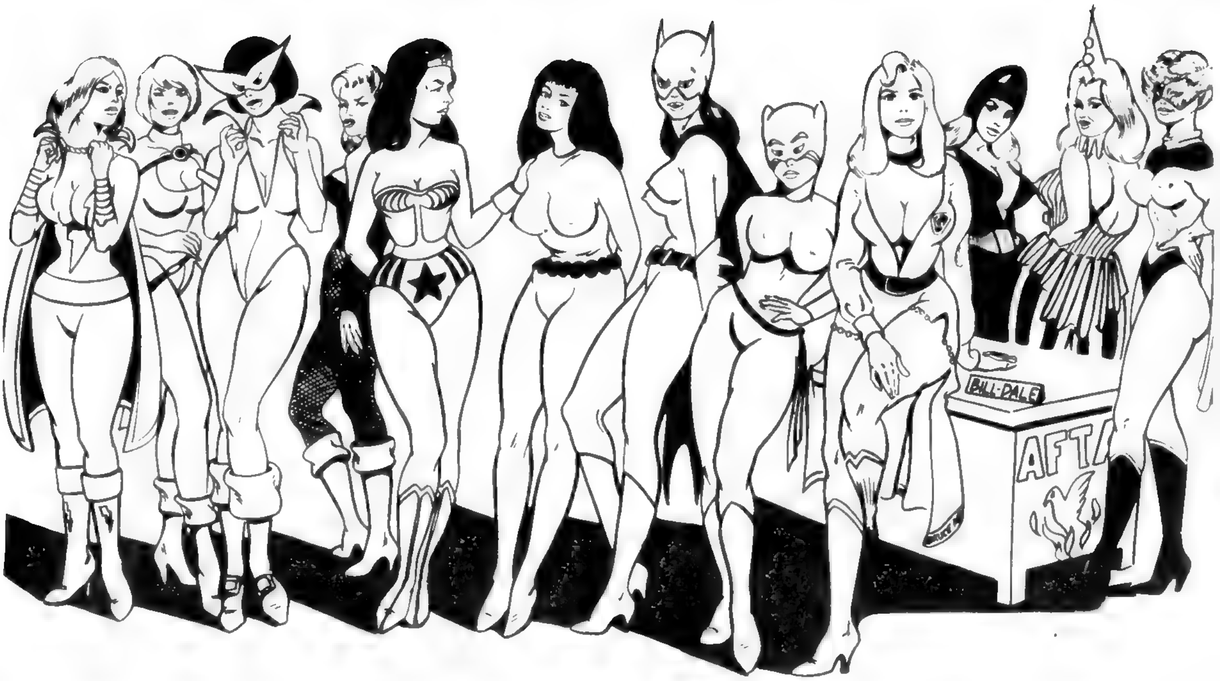

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Are Comics Sexist?

("I asked that question of some of my regular correspondents. They gave me the following answers. (This is FAN FORUM #1)"--Bill-Dale)

DAN BECK, 253 West 9 North, Lehi, UT 84043

Yes, but not too much anymore. They are getting more and more sexist in their portrayal of men and I'm getting damned tired of it! All the women;especially Power Girl and Wonder Woman, present men as the sole cause of the world's problems and states that all they are concerned over is power and money. Men don't feel, have love problems, etc. like women. All we think about is muscle, greed, sex, domination over others, and controlling the world. Women are raised to be mothers and that is all, and they must break the mold. They forget that men were raised to be in command, hide emotions, etc. and that we too have a mold to break but can't and won't with this type of an attack going on. Both men and women must realize the other's problems or we'll be at each others throats forever.

("I led off with Dan's letter because I want everyone to keep it clear in their minds that the discussion of sexism must apply to both men and women. Most of the letters following point out women as being the sole victims of male sex fantasies that put women in a subservient position. Few people mention that while these fantasies glorify men, they also condemn them. I think we should look for a kind of middle, a human portrayal that is a combination of traditional male and female characteristics and emotional responses. I'd like to think that AFTA is not dogmatically bound to any political reasoning, and that my reason for adopting feminism as an attitude in my life was because I wanted to look forward to a world which is free of stereotyping, rather than a society which just inverts the stereotypes (male dominant becoming female dominant) every civilization or so." --Bill-Dale)

STEVEN ALAN BENNETT, 842 Hunt St., Akron, OH 44306

Of course they are, if not always in content, then in format (the half naked lady between the heroic hero's feet is a classic pose for ALL American popular literature, and besides citing CONAN, check the poster for Clint Eastwood's newest flick, THE GAUNTLET). I believe they have made a definite move away from giving women sexist roles in the STORIES, but how they are ARTISTICALLY represented is still as backward as the "tie-'em-up" comics of the '50s. Since most artists in the field are men, its natural that they would enjoy drawing beautiful women, but what's out of the question is the impossible proportions they lovingly give them (Marvel is the biggest offender. I imagine doing that does tend to spice up what would normally be a ho-hum job, but it doesn't help anyone interested in telling a graphic story. What I'm trying to say, a writer can work his arse off to make a female a fascinating, and powerful character, but if the artist's presentation of the character locks her into a reader's implanted prejudices, what good does it do? But then again, I believe this is just a very small part of a larger problem. Take a look at the HOW TO DRAW THE MARVEL WAY book and you'll see a large part of the artist's currently working draw EVERY character into a stiff, stereotyped block. Its general casting time, and no cutting across the grains, please. Perhaps it would help to tell better graphic stories if the artists could present REAL people, real people in real situations, instead of the formula ridden material that's been printed since the beginning. I think its incredible how people can point a finger

ARE COMICS SEXIST? (continued)

at Jack Kirby for making all his characters look fairly alike, when it only takes a bit of close examination to see most artists do the same thing. But as I said before, "sexism" in comics is only a very small part of a large problem, and I think instead of worrying about boobs, we should sit down and concern ourselves with the REAL issues at hand.

JIM BERTGES, 1332 Currant Av., Simi Valley, CA 93065

Comic fandom and comics are sexist and discriminatory. We're getting away from that now somewhat, but there is still a lot of discrimination going on. Although there is anti-female discrimination in fandom, it is not intentional and most of the discrimination connected with comics and fandom is not anti-female. Sure, all superheroes have been men and the women have been weak and "feminine" (No, I take that back, there have been lots of women heroes, but I can't recall many weak and "feminine" men), but when superheroes started back in the 30's and 40's, they reflected the times. And as the times change, so will comics. But since the Women's Rights movement has been described as a People's Rights movement, let's talk about some other types of discrimination.

What I'm talking about is the fact that most of us in fandom and even many writers and artists were the turkeys of our social groups. Now, don't turn around and pretend you didn't read that. You know what I mean. We all had "defects", some physical, some mental or both. Those defects set us apart from all the popular people we wanted to socialize with. When you were in school, were you too fat, too skinny, poor in sports? Did you wear glasses, have zits, get perfect scores on everything, or have some other social defect? Or were you considered weird? Where does such a person turn when he's outcast from the society where he feels he should belong? Fantasy.

That's where fandom started. The social rejects. We plunged ourselves into fantasy worlds where we could be the heroes. We couldn't live the way we had been led to believe we should, so we lived our lives vicariously in our fantasies. Eventually, we discovered other misfits who shared our love for fantasy and fantasy lives and we banded together. Generally we rejects were male. I don't really know why the male and female rejects never got together, but I think it has a lot to do with the way society cast male and female roles up until just recently. To look at the situation objectively, we must remember that all of us have grown up with the concepts of Male=Strong and Female=Weak. It takes a conscious effort to break away from that ingrained way of thinking. But, from a subjective viewpoint, just who was discriminating against whom when we weirdos wanted to join in on a normal social life and were spurned by our peers, both male and female? We were forced into our own society and we excluded those who had rejected us from theirs (that, unfortunately, included most of the good looking girls).

Now, I'm not making excuses, nor am I falling back on self pity. I'm just making statements, shaded by personal experience and prejudice. It has only been in recent years that we all have been able to look at the entire sex role casting that has gone on in our society from a more elevated viewpoint. And now most people are beginning to realize that a human being is a human being, regardless of sex, race, color, religion, shoe size or preference in reading material and should be treated as a person. As we see the slow change in the consciousness of our society, we'll see the change reflected in our comics and fantasy material as well. And I Think the change will be for the best.

DALE JAY BLAKENEY, 1312 Royal Oaks Dr., Waco, TX 76710

One look at the cover of the 1978 Overstreet Price Guide (as shown in TBG) and all I can say is YES! That cover sums up the basic approach to women in comics. Look at recent FLASH covers. Iris Allen is depicted in the long-outdated mini-skirt by sexist male artists (inside artist Irv Novick does not stoop this low). Other artists continue to draw those dreadful mini-skirts (Sal Buscema is one of them). (Characters in comics rarely look fashionable, come to think of it. How many artists realize that we're living in the world of 1978?) The characterization of women in comics has been ghastly! In the old days, heroines were mere copies of Lois Lane (and copies are stereotypes)- by heroines I mean girlfriends. How many super-heroines have been convincing characters? At Marvel, Black Widow and Scarlet Witch have fared better than most. Back in the '60's, sexist male readers demanded that Sif be made more "feminine"-- she was turned into a simpering, weepy, clinging mush-brain. Yes, the writers complied with the readers' demands. Originally, Sif was a strong, balanced warrior--the transition to thousand-tears was unforgivable. That cycle ended in Sif's life but she's never been the same since. Women have repeatedly been kidnapped and saved by THE HERO. How degrading. Didn't anyone out there in comicsland ever realize that some women are brave (gasp! gasp!) and not wilting crybabies? As for intelligent women in comics, forget it! Only Saturn Girl of the Legion of Super-Heroes comes to mind--she has always been depicted as balanced, unsentimental, brilliant. The Wasp has always been shown as addlebrained (despite this, I like the character--she's funnier than most of the stuck-up super-heroines.

ROGER CALDWELL, 1119 Mayflower Road., Kingston, TN 37763

By their very nature, they are, because they are written mainly for the male audience. Characterizations in comics are mostly shallow anyway, hence the women characters are even more shallow. Plus the fact that a number of the male writers currently working in the field don't know how to write genuine dialogue for the female characters, nor do they know how to convey women's feelings or emotions with any degree of sincerity. Many women characters in groups have only supportive roles and their powers are mainly good for defense and not offense. The male characters dominate and have the offensive or first-strike powers. Superman and Green Lantern in the JLA usually tackle the foe first, with Wonder Woman usually left for clean-up. The Black Canary usually stands by and looks pretty. While Wonder Woman is a strong character she is seldom used to her full possibilities and is rarely even used correctly in relation to her past continuity. Red Sonja is one of the most sexist in that she is not much more than a female Conan. In her current half-naked incarnation she

ARE COMICS SEXIST? (continued)

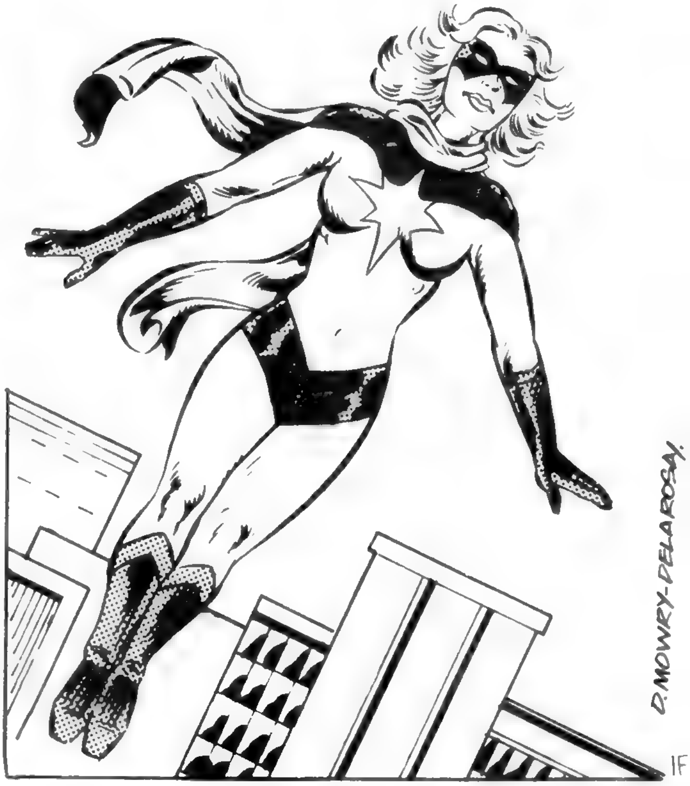
is no more a realistically portrayed character than any other comic character. She was created, in her skimpy bikini, to sell to that group that appreciate seeing the typical half-naked, half-witted supporting female character that populates so many comics. Othercomics that voyeurs appreciate on one level or another must surely be Ms. Marvel, who gets beaten quite often to the point her costume is almost ripped off, Tigra, Spider-woman, and various other groups and supporting characters who are shown in a lot of crotch shots and otherwise uncompromising configurations. COmics have a long way to go before they overcome their undignified glorification of sexist stereotyped, soap operish, cowering women. What does the male readership want? Heroines bound and gagged, forever to be unfulled in characterization and meaningful development? As long as they support such creations as Red Sonja that may be the case.

JIM CRAWFORD, 4688 Marburg #3,
Cincinnati, OH 45209

Comics do seem to be sexist in their general approach, yes. Of the comics on the market, only the Richie Rich series lacks sexual content; even the Archie comics are getting more daring in their portrayal of the natural charms of the female characters. It is an interesting paradox, however, that the interest in sex, causing the production of more sexually-oriented comics, is at the same time matched by the failure of many of those comics. For example, only Wonder Woman has kept publishing since the Golden Age. Although we now have Ms. Marvel, Red Sonja, and the newly-started Spider-Woman, recent months have seen the ending of the Cat, Night Nurse, Starfire, Rima, and Isis, among others (not to forget two of DC's main characters--Lois Lane and Supergirl.) As far as the sexist portrayal goes, however, there is some question just how much harm, if any, it is doing. Fortunately, we have a division in the types of comics published. The Archie comics with a relatively low-key sexuality, appeal to the youngest individuals. The super-hero and super-heroine comics appeal to older individuals (teenagers and up). Now, one thing that we have to consider is this--young people in the US are becoming sexually mature at an earlier age. They are also tending to reach some degree of social maturity earlier, whether this is good or bad. Thus, the "sexy" type of comic is not so wild to them-- most likely, the same youngsters that buy the "sexy" comics have already read pornographic books, use foul language, and the like. Not that I necessarily condone those "qualities," but that is the nature of reality, and we must deal with reality, like it or not. In summary, then, comics are sexist in their portrayal of women, but I do not think that that fact is necessarily bad in and of itself.

SANDY DURHAM, RR #5, Box 246, Martinsville,
IN 46151

When our beloved editor hit me with the above question, my nostrils flared and I saw red. Is the sky blue? Do birds have feathers Is Conan of Cimmeria a male chauvinist? Of course comics are sexist! And since comics are sexist, the fandom they generate is just as sexist! Contemplate if you will the basic male heroes. Every single one of them is soaked to the gills in super high-potency MACHO. The hero/is always right, handsome, strong, undeniably masculine and virile, especially virile. This occurs with unfailing regularity. If the hero goofs up, a rare occurence at best, he bounces back and conquers all with a liberal application of intelligence, strength and good old masculine knowhow. Every hero has at least one nubile female clawing her way up his leg demanding immediate matrimony. Most have more than one, depending on the degree of the chief writer's insecurity. The artwork invariably depicts the heroes as pillars of pulsating male power, magnificent male musculature rippling under costumes that define every area of the body, except one. Thank Heaven for the COMics Code or the youn men of America would be even more intimidate than they are.



Now, contemplate the ladies. They fall into three groups: Superheroines, Girlfrien and Super-villainesses. Even they have certain unmistakable characteristics in com They are all absolutely, positively gorgeous. Every single one of them is Playboy centerfold material. They wear outfits that cling like second skins and would be devilishly uncomfortable if anyone really wore them.

Nine times out of ten, the ladies are pining away for love of some super-macho type who is too busy saving the world, foiling criminals and being the idol of millions of panting females, to pay attention to them. Those females who are not clutching at pantlegs are either totally disdainful of men or they are "liberated" to the point of being obnoxious. The Black Canary is the only lady who has been able to be liberated while maintaining a reasonably normal relationship with Green Arrow. Then, there is Red Sonja. Now, Red Sonja is my kind of lady, bad-tempered and blood-thirsty, but there is one thing about her that bugs me. It is that never-to-be-sufficiently-swore-at vow she made! The man responsible for that piece of sexist tripe ought to be on the receiving end of some freehand surgery with a dull Hyrkanian broadsword! The implication of the situation is that, without the restraint of the vow, Red Sonja's morals would be as loose as her armor. The insult is obvious.

And just what are the consequence of this lop-sided view? The first if that most girls don't read comics. The boys get the idea that in order to get girls, they must be heroes with great bodies, unequaled virility and an unlimited supply of MACHO! And only the physically perfect, adoring girl is acceptable. Needless to say, disillusionment is quick in coming. The rampaging mis-conceptions are continued by fans-turned-writers who visualize themselves as their super-powered characters. They write accordingly. The fact that the stuf continues to sell does not encourage change. Consequentally, comics fandom is all male for all practical purposes. The sexist atmosphere that pervades comics fandom does not encourage intelligent participation by females. The feminine influence is growing in comics but a woman's byline is still a rare thing. In fandom, active particpation by women is limited to costume competitions. It can get discouraging if you don't look like Red Sonja, Supergirl, or Black Canary.

What we need to offset some four decades of male domination is more female editors and writers, not to mention artists. The old excuse that there are no female editors and writers won't wash anymore. They are out there and all they require is a chance to show what they can do. Who knows, maybe girls will start reading comics.

("How about feminist writers and editors, regardless of sex. There are many men who write competently of women, and too, many women who still write in sexist terms--look at all the Gothic Romance authors--women who are still perpetuating the old male and female roles." --Bill-Dale)

CLAY GEERDES, PO Box 7081, Colusa Station, Berkeley, CA 94707

I don't think the term is terribly meaningful where comix are concerned. Comics exist in the realm of fantasy where all characters, male or female, are idealized sex objects. Most fans like them that way. THey don't want to see a scarred, ugly, hairy Conan or a Sonja without a Hollywood hairdo. They don't want to watch Tarzan and Jane having a fight over who is going to sweep the monkeyshit out of the treehouse. The problem is fantasy vs. reality. Those who say comics are sexist and degrade women are equating the fantasy-creatures in the comics with *real* people. They're not. The argument is a little more valid where one is dealing with comics where there is a level of social realism sandwiched in with the fantasy (as in Spiderman & Green Lanter and some issuesof Superman), but I reject it entirely. I don't think it's possible for a comic to be sexist, over or underground. You say that underground is definitely sexist, yet numerous undergrounds like *Wimmen's Comix*, *Manhunt*, *Pudge*, *Vamp*, etc. have been drawn, edited, and even published by women, where no one single comic in the Eastern establishment controlled by Marvel or DC is drawn or published by a woman. The content, say, in Crumb or S. Clay Wilson, is sexist *only if you equate their fantasy characters with reality*. I feel no compulsion to do that. For those that do, it's their problem. I enjoy both over and underground comix and I know that the undergrounds, particularly those done by women, come closer to the reality around *me* here in Berkeley and the Bay Area than *do* the Marvels and DCs. Ms. Marvel is nothing but Captain Marvel in drag and her life is absurd. The sexism there lies in the fact that Marvel will never let a woman write or draw a comic. If you're dealing with sexism, you have to deal with what is going on in the companies, not the fantasies that appear in the magazines.

TOM MASON, 705 Draper Rd., Blacksburg, VA 24060

Like TIME magazine (or maybe it was NEWSWEEK) said, comics are written by men for a predominantly male audience. So sexism is a natural outgrowth of that situation. Even when women are occasionally portrayed as a man's equal, they come off acting like men as opposed to females when in dangerous situations (like Red Sonja)

WILLIE PEPPERS, JR., 1043 Dixie Highway, Louisville, KY 40210

I don't think that the comics portrayal of women is exactly sexist per se. I do however think that as time goes by, and things of this nature become more and more permissive, comics slowly creep up to see what the limits are. I'm sure that there is a little sexual exploitation in just about all comics, but I don't think it's at a level for anyone to raise their eyebrows over. And personally, though I am sure that there'll be many who'll disagree, I don't think there is any sexual connotations concerning Red Sonja. Though she is scantilly clad, (as well she should be because of the time period) I see her as a *person* with a strong will, unspeakable determination, a little bit of sorrow, and little fear of anything, not (as some people see her) as a pretty *woman* with a magnificent *body*. I am more interested (and I think *all* should be) in the mental, spiritual, and emotional side of Sonja rather than her physical aspects. Of course I *acknowledge* her looks, but I think that anyone who can't see past just her physical appearance has little or no imagination and no concern for *human beings* as opposed to Male/Female.

RICK PETERSON, 2533 Hillegas #305, Berkeley, CA 94704

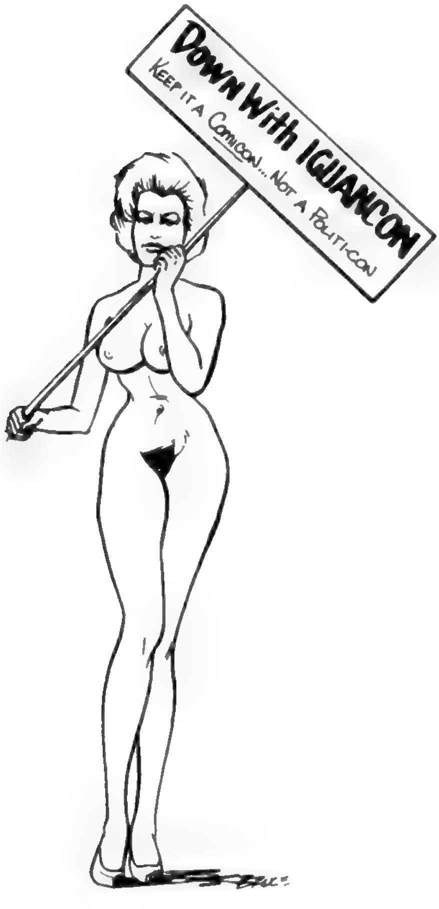
The question of whether there is sexism in comics is easily answered. One need only consider the long-standing treatment of the Invisible "Girl" or the interchangable characterization of the early Marvel heroines (one per team) to find the answer. Comics

ARE COMICS SEXIST? (continued)

resemble mythology in the way it draws on the fantasies and archetypes of a culture. In America these have been (and to a large extent still are) sexist because the culture itself has been sexist. Comics (as with any media) hold up a mirror to society. Consequently sexism will disappear in comics when it disappears from the society at large.

Of course it really isn't that simple. Since the creators whose fantasies fuel comic books are almost entirely men, it is hardly surprising that the heroes are usually male and the occasional female rarely comes across believably. Furthermore the nature of superhero comics tends to produce certain fixed roles (e.g. the hero and his girlfriend) which tend to perpetuate sexist role playing. There are, fortunately, exceptions to this pattern and of late women have been handled with more understanding. Even the Invisible Girl is starting to show some individuality and Chris Claremont has produced a number of female characters who are better developed and more real than most male heroes. For sexism is mainly a matter of dealing with stereotypes rather than dealing with people as individuals. When characters, male and female, are developed as real individuals rather than falling back on the old stereotypes; then comic books may start influencing society rather than merely mirroring it.

It seems ridiculous to have to make an issue of this, since the importance of characterization to comic books should be obvious. The best way to keep the readers buying a mag is to make the characters real to them, to make them care about them. This was an important factor in the early success of Marvel, and Spiderman in particular. Reading these old comics I feel a realness and vitality to Peter Parker often missing in newer comics. This sort of in-depth characterization takes effort and requires a real understanding of the character. In comics as elsewhere, however, the line of least resistance is likely to be taken: if they can sell enough comics without it to get by, few people are going to make the effort needed to get this sort of characterization.


Down With IGUANACON
Keep it a Comicon... Not a Politi-con

ROD SNYDER, 3600 Ripple Creek, Austin, TX 78746

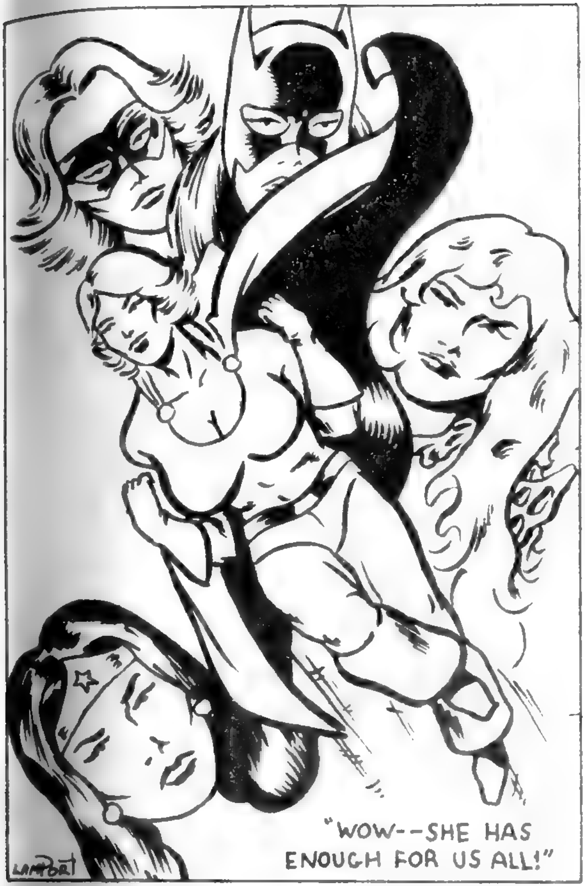
In fact, "sexism" is the wrong term for this. Ethics don't count when the business in question is out to sell books. Sure, there is a comics code which purveys ethics consciousness among producers; but one sellin point of all books is the extent to which audiences can relate to what the books depict. Is "sexism" to be defined as irrational or unrealistic portrayal of one sex's attributes, or just the absence of that sex's reality perspective? If the latter, I've proven already that sexism is an intrinsic element; if the former, I've implied that a sexism bent is probable in most titles. Producer ranks remain primarily male, readership the same-- what do males know about what a female super-being or mutant/alien character might really be thinking?

Now that this is certainly detrimental to anybody--females don't have to buycomics if they feel more confortable with Nancy Drew or Harlequin Romances (oops!-- was that remark sexist?). It merely applies to the comic business market. When readership changes, so will this market. Mass audience "buying power" then is the only way to get anything "done about it."

Comics can give youngsters the wrong idea about a few things, but nothing that might be corrected later in their experience with media. Educators, fundamentalists particularly, mistakenly assume that one media viewpoint can change a child's beliefs for good. This notion conflicts with psychology's knowledge that mental world view and introspection changes in nature at least twice during pre-adult life. There is, for typical children, the first, six year or so stage of behavior formation followed by complications developed during elementary school years, trailed by the jr. high-high school "rebelli period. All of us learned the majority of what we know before we could read. After th first stage, when we learn the meaning behin the stories we are told, I think we can "unlearn" anything because our minds then ta in vast quantities of ethical, abstract thou and we refine our selfishness to discover ou favorite behavior/methodology. We pick and choose from good and bad, so to speak, in defining ourselves. After that first stage.

MICHAEL WALKER, 94 Eagle St., Brooklyn, NY 11222

In all honesty I must answer "no." The treatment and characterization of women in comics is being done much more realistically and with greater thoughtfulness. Just look at the work Chris Claremont has done with Ms. Marvel- she is not just a woman superhero - or even your stereotypical women's libber, instead she is a growing, developing personality- a superhero who also happens to be a woman. The same can be said of Power Girl Red Sonja, Hawkgirl, and others. Just as in today's movies, there are a great many fine "roles" for the ladies in the comic book audience. Perhaps the only objection (and a shallow one, at that) is the comics constant portrayal of ladies with gigantic breasts. It seems that most comic artists have a


"WOW--SHE HAS ENOUGH FOR US ALL!"
Lampert

ARE COMICS SEXIST? (continued)

mammary gland fixation. A lady who has never read comic books could, quite probably, point out that comic superheroines are drawn as sex objects. I enjoy the slim, small breasted women of Chaykin as much as the voluptuous ladies of Frazetta. I just think there should be more of a balance.

PIERCE ASKEGREN, Box 224, JMU, Harrisburg, VA 22801

Certainly comic books are sexist. As a friend of mine here on campus has commented, most female Marvel characters are "men with tits," and I feel that the bulk of the DC heroines are just as cardboard as their male counterparts. There are exceptions, of course, most notably in the work of Claremont and Levitz. While I have no particular objection to the Red Sonja show, the character herself apalls me--with the limitations on her sexual nature, Big Red strikes me as a high fantasy Looking For Mister Goodbar. (Hmm--Diane Keaton in chain mail bikini...?) The problem with comic book sexism is that comics generally consist of the skillful manipulation of stereotypes, and our society has developed fewer stereotypes for women than for men. Stereotypes per se are not a bad thing; they serve as a method for codifying people and things. The drawback in this case is that it will take awhile to develope new ones flexible enough not to be unfair.

MIKE WHITE, 207 W. Fast, Mackinaw, IL 61755

Comic books are sexist general, but not so much so today as in years past. Let's take a look at evidence (with some good ol prejudices thrown in to boot).

The 40's and 50's were basically wastelands for the female in comic books. Sheena and Wonder Woman come to mind as exceptions to the rule, but these books had a sort of reverse sexism. Men were treated as the "inferior"sex and also the source of practically all evil in the universe. In a sense, this was worse than the way women were treated in comics because they were made out to be empty-headed playthings, not would-be world-conquerors. (The early Wonder Woman stories deserve some credit for the number of women foes she faced. Goes to show that men weren't the only source of evil after all) With the coming of the 60's and Marvel comics, the female in comics started to get a better name. Sue Storm Richards actually fought beside three male comrades! Sure she had the weakest power of the Fantastic Four, but at least she was there. Who cared if she got taken prisoner or knocked unconscious more often than anyone else? Later on it seemed as if the writers wanted to get rid of the INvisible Girl. Hell, it looked to me as if every other villain carried around a radar-scanner just to spot her. Then she got pregnant. It was a ground-breaking event in comics, but it sure limited her participation for one heck of a long time. Stan Lee must have felt it necessary to bring her back in action since a governess soon took care of the young Richards child. Until recently, Sue Richards was playing only minor parts in the FF sagas. It's no wonder that so many readers have asked that she quit the team.

Another big stumbling block was the super-teams. Each seemed to have only one token female in their line-up. The Avengers had the Scarlet Witch; The Justice League had Wonder Woman; The X-Men had Marvel Girl; The Teen Titans had Wonder Girl; and the Doom Patrol had Elasti-Girl. It was not the best of times for super-heroines. (The Avengers did have the Wasp, so credit again goes to Mr. Lee) Looking at that list, it is easy to see that the women were far from being the strongest members of the teams. How many male stars did you collapse from casting one hex? (Dr. Strange sure didn't) Wonder Woman had the strength, but that damned magic lasso would be used almost as much against her as for her. For this time period, I would definitely have to say that comics formed a negative attitude about women. They were always being captured so the men had to come to the rescue. I've deliberately avoided the worst offender of all: Lois Lane. God, how I hated those stories. Even though I bought the book mainly to see Superman, the way Lois acted offended even my eight-year-old senses. She was also oneof the reasons I quit reading comics several years later. Some series do deserve mention for the way they portrayed the female heroes. Jim Shooter's Legion of Super Heroes was one of the best, as it had the boys fighting right alongside and sometimes against the girls. Medusa of the Inhumans was one of my favorites since she had to often speak for Black Bolt. (I always wondered if she actually told what he wanted her to or if she made up things to please herself. Yeah, I know it's weird, but it sure is fun to think about) Basically (again) comic books were a very sexist medium for all this time. I got out of comics in about 1969 for the reason that most of my friends were also "growing out of it". I read only an occasional Spider-Man

ARE COMICS SEXIST? (continued)

or Superman during the next five years, and then suddenly decided to get back into the world of comic books. My first reaction was "Wow!" The treatment of women in comics had come a long way. Gwen Stacy had been killed off in Spider-Man, for one thing. That may not seem like much, but when you consider that she was killed off in favor of Mary Jane Watson, it can only be determined to be a plug. Gwen was a typical stereotyped empty-blonde who got Parker into more trouble than she was worth. MJ, on the other hand, is a totally liberated lady (or atleast, pretty close) with her own life to run, not Peter Parker's. One of the first Marvels I read was FF #1's 151-153; the Mahkizmo/Thundra story. It embodies a lot of what is wrong with comics and tries to correct them for three issues at least. The one fault with that series is that it not only shows Male Chauvinism, but also Female Chauvinism in a sort of self-defeating manner. Currently there are no less than five comics devoted to women on the stands, but two of these have recently been cancelled. Things still aren't looking up for the super-heroine.

There you have it: a personal view of the high and low points of feminism in comics. I am now prompted to answer the question of what can be done about it. I have several suggestions. One is to get more women involved in the production of comics (that is, writing and drawing). Very few ladies are willing to get involved with comics because of the very macho concepts currently in use. No male writer can truly give us the perspective from which a woman sees things, so those that try with some success (Chris Claremont) deserve recognition. An even better solution that men onthe male characters and women on the female characters would be a 50-50 partnership to eliminate sexism altogether. The two major publishing houses (Marvel and DC) should make an attempt to draw some female women out there with at least as much skill as Ric Estrada, who is one of the worst artists in the field today. DC should have less trouble in this department since their publisher is a woman. Maybe that's a sexist statement in itself. I'm not sure. Another answer is to give super-heroines tryouts in books before launching them into their own titles. One reason for the failure of ISIS and STARFIRE may be that they had no chance to build up an audience. Eight issues is a fair number, but I'd almost bet that many female fans don't even know that the books are around. DC is showing the proper caution with their next attempt, Power Gil, by running her for three issues in their SHOWCASE title. ("Does anyone else, by the way, see the obvious symbolism in the breaking out of the symbiosis machine in Power Girl?" --Bill-Dale)

EMILY LATELLA, NBC-tv, Weekend Update News Department, New York, NY.

What's all this I hear about comets being sexy. I don't think that comets are sexy, or that interesting at all. In fact, if you get too close, you can get yourself a nasty burn.

("No, Emily, that's comics, not comets. We want to know whether comics are sexist."
--Bill-Dale)

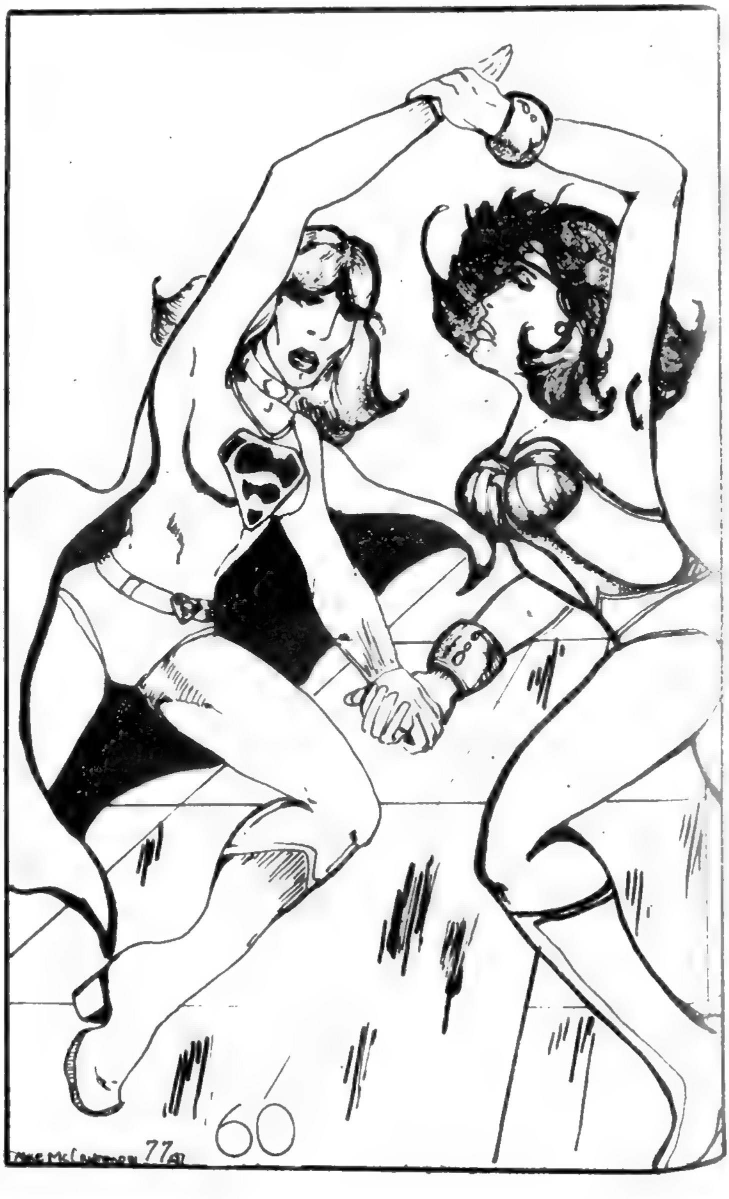
Never mind. --Emily.

("Well, that's the end of FAN FORUM QUESTION #1: "Are Comics Sexist?" If you feel you have something to say on the subject, please write, and I'll run your response. FAN FORUM QUESTION #2 is "Which did you prefer, Star Wars or Close Encounters, and why?" It appears in Part Two. Next issue, our special Fandom issue (It's my 10th anniversary in fandom) FAN FORUM QUESTION #3 is "Are fans a special breed?" What differences are there between fans and non-fans in personality, intelligence, and attitude toward life? Please address the concept of fandom as a separate culture or society, with special rules all its own. Send me your response to that right away at RPO 5009, Rutgers U, New Brunswick, NJ 08903, and I'll run the most interesting ones in AFTA #3." --B.D.)

NO. 5 —

→

DALE MARCINKO'S HEART



HOT PATOOTIE: IT'S A ROCKY HORROR APA!

My roommate, Noah, is not a comics fan, lthough he might be said to possess certain atent fannish tendencies. Like any other omics fan, he keeps up with a number of urrent titles. He's as highly opinionated bout everything that goes on in comics, TV, nd movies as any other comics fan. And e regularly helps himself to the countless anzines and apas that I constantly leave ying around for him to paw through at his eisure. But Noah still insists he is not fan, and adamantly refuses to have anything o do with fandom. Too much work, he says. He may have a point there.)

Not long ago, after a recent visit to New ork, I brought home the soundtrack album o ROCKY HORROR PICTURE SHOW, and the poor ad almost hit the ceiling. "Why is it," oah demanded, "that all you comics fans are o fond of a movie about transvestites?!?" andom may have lost him forever that day. oah has never seen the movie, and swears hat he never will. As it turns out, he'd nce caught some ads for it on television (!), and his sister used to be an occasional part f the infamous Waverly audience in New York; eventually, he deduced from these sources that ROCKY HORROR has something to do with ransvestites, and this particular element is the closest thing to redeeming social value it has to offer. Being the square, straightlaced sort of fellow he is, it was easy enough for him to decide that ROCKY HORROR therefore had no excuse for having been made. Anything and Everything having to do with it has no justification for existence.

So you can well imagine Noah's reaction when he casually glanced at one of my apazine and discovered it was the first mailing of TRANSYLVANIAN CONVENTION, The Rocky Horror apa.

Apas -- that's Amateur Press Associations for the uninformed -- have been around a long time, the first one having been founded sometime in the last century. The concept was adopted by sf fandom, and more recently by comics fandom, as one of the most vital and important fannish means of communication and outlets for creativity. An apa could be described as a cross between a fanzine exchange center and a great big collective correspondence. Most apas have a limited membership, so there are often long waitlists of people waiting to get in, waiting for current members to resign or gafiate or somehow fail to contribute the minimum number of pages required to maintain apa membership.

Also, most apas tend to have a broad, underlying central purpose or theme, a common interest that serves to unite its members. For example, CAPA-alpha, the first comics apa, was founded in 1964 by Jerry Bails, intended as a forum for discussion of the latest developments and goings-on in comics and fandom. (At times, it seems as though comics are almost *incidental* to what CAPA-alpha is all about, but that's another story.) Each member publishes 50 copies of his own little apazine, sends them to the Central Mailer, who collates and staples them into 50 identical volumes, and he sends them back out to the rest of the membership. There are several dozen apas to be found, some focusing on comics, others on sf, and still others on slightly more specific or narrower fields. There are apas devoted to film, to children's literature... there's one devoted to H.P. Lovecraft which comes to mind, and these are among the *least* esoteric apas. And then, there's INTERLAC, the biggest success story in recent apa history, which is devoted primarily to one particular, singular comics feature: the Legion of Super-Heroes. INTERLAC is two years old this June, has an enthusiastic membership of 50 and a waitlist of 30. An average bi-monthly mailing of INTERLAC is likely to contain anywhere from 300 to 500 pages, or more.

I've provided this lengthy introduction to apas in order to make a striking comparison. The success and growth of INTERLAC will become even more apparent when I mention that its *first* mailing had only five contributors and was barely 25 pages long. Obviously it's come a long way in two years.

The mind boggles, however, at the thought of what TRANSYLVANIAN CONVENTION will be like on *its* second anniversary. The first mailing has *eleven* contributors, and weighs in at just over *70* pages.

That it would have a second anniversary at all, or even a second mailing, is only a fairly recent decision by TC's founder, Paula O'Keefe. The Rocky Horror apa was originally planned as a one-shot project, and then, cautiously, as a two-shot. But Paula couldn't possibly have realized how much of a monster she'd created. It is now probably impossible to obtain a copy of TRANSYLVANIAN CONVENTION #1, since she set the original copy requirement at only 20. Now that it's becoming apparent that there's more than a passing interest in this project, future mailings will have somewhat higher copy requirements...but the only way to get one is to join and to contribute to it.

What exactly can one expect to find in an apa devoted to one of the biggest cult films in history? If you know anything at all about the ROCKY HORROR PICTURE SHOW, you might be able to make some logical guesses, but don't expect to do more than to scratch the surface. There's a fair share of RHPS first impressions reminisced, and there's lotsa reprinted newspaper articles and reviews of the movie. One member, however, does his own Rocky Horror *fiction*; another does RHPS poetry. There's a con report from the recent RH convention-- yep, they've got cons now too. Others busily analyze the plot, the characters...one member interprets the film as a long metaphor for college life! (and with every copy of the mailing there is a front page from the CLEVELAND PLAIN DEALER-a very functional in-joke which is just the thing one needs to attend the next showing of ROCKY HORROR in style!)

TRANSYLVANIAN CONVENTION is still in the formative stages. So far it hasn't even got an official constitution, which is indicative of the fact that TC is loose and informal by design, unlike some of the more politically-structured apas around. Its schedule is tentatively planned for three mailings a year (June, October, and January; deadline for #2 was June 24th; dues will work out to be roughly $1 per mailing) ("Dues are charged for the cost of envelopes and postage in mailing the collected mailing to members." --Bill-Dale) If this sounds like something worth your while to check out, then drop a line to Paula O'Keefe, 157 Glades Road,

HOT PATOOTIE! A ROCKY HORROR APA! (continued)
by Jay Zilber

Minot, MA 02055...but do it today so that the copy requirement can be set high enough to insure that there are enough to go around. Paula and her staff of identical clones assure me that they'll be happy to answer any questions you could possibly want to ask...and more.

Of course, if you haven't seen the movie at all, ever, then for you the existence of a ROCKY HORROR PICTURE SHOW apa must be irrelevant. To those of you, all I can say is that it's a film that MUST be seen at least once by anyone within the fringes of fandom. You may never want to see it again, or you may become enough of a fanatic to see it again and again and again. It's impossible to predict its affect on people in advance. For example, we're going to forcibly drag Noah to the show sometime this summer...and it's entirely possible that he'll be the most enthusiastic member of TRANSYLVANIAN CONVENTION by this fall...

--Jay Zilber

Now Living At Ken Gale's FAN CENTRAL STATION
220 E. 85th St., Apt. 5R, New York, NY 10028

OTHER APAs

CAPA-ALPHA (K-A)

The first comics-oriented apa, and probably the best. Central Mailer is Rich Morrissey, 55 Claudette Circle, Framingham, MA 01701. Members include Gary Brown, Harry Broertjes, Jay Zilber, Mike Valerio, Jeff Wasserman, Bill Sherman, Mark Evanier, Neal Pozner, Mike Flynn, Rob Solomon and others. Published monthly with a minimum activity (min ac) rate of four pages every three mailings. One dollar and an application for membership wins you a sample copy and a spot on the waitlist.

INTERLAC

Interlac hits the two-year mark this June. Founded by Rich Morrissey as Legion of Super-Heroes apa, Interlac has grown to mammoth proportions. The emphasis is on the Legion, with comics-in-general, music, films and other topics thrown in for good measure. Members include: Mike Flynn, Bob Rodi, Jay Zilber, Paul Levitz, Neal Pozner, Liam O'Connor, Scott Sherman, Mike Valerio, Rick Taylor, Mike Raub, Frank Mancuso and Len Rosenberg. CM is Harry Broertjes, 566 NE 20th St., Apt. 9, Fort Lauderdale, FL 33305. Interlac is bi-monthly with a minac rate of 4 pages every three mailings. Two dollars earns you a waitlist spot and a sample mailing.

NYAPA

A loose, comics-and-general-discussion apa, unofficially devoted to faan fiction. Bi-monthly. CM is Charles (WEIRD FAAN FICTION) Spanier, 52 Seneca St., Staten Island, NY 10310. Write to Chuck for details for this highly entertaining apa. Charlie also publishes WEIRD FAAN FICTION, a fanzine with faanish fiction inside, at 75¢ a copy. Send for the latest issue while you're at it.

CAPRA

As the title suggests, a film apa. Published in January, April, July, and October. Minac is one page every other mailing. Sample mailings are available on request from Official Editor Doug J. Hoylman, 5480 Wisconsin Av., #311, Chevy Chase, MD 20015

PHOENIX

Mark A. Ernst's comics and general discussion apa, just begun last year. I haven't heard from Mark, so I don't know the current status, dues, members, if there's a waitlist, etc., since things were a bit in flux when I wrote him in March, 1978. Find out the latest from Mark, at Canterbury, NH 03224 (no street address).

APA-H

Harry J.N. Andruschak (6933 N. Rosemead, #31, San Gabriel, CA 91775) heads up APA-H, the apa of lies and hoaxes. No one can be sure if anyone is telling the truth, or actually exists. Mind-bending truth paradox, insanity, paranoia-- what more can you ask for? Some of the real people that will admit to being a part of it include Bill Bridget, John Thiel, Andrew Sigel, Meade Frierson III, although you can never tell since they are making up members at an incredible rate. I had heard that APA-H has split into two, each half claiming to be the real APA-H, although it is altogether possible that this may, too, be a hoax.

Minac is 2 pages every other mailing, copy count- 50, and dues, damned if I can figure it out. Write to Harry.

APA-5

is a general discussion apa, $1.00 for a waitlist spot and a sample mailing. Write to Mike Bentley, 1215 #6 High St., Bellingham, WA.

CANADAPA

Yearly dues are $3. Very informal, but friendly apa, on any topics. Page requirement is 4 every 2 mailings (we're bi-monthly) 30 copies. Membership is limited to 25. Mike Sutton, 239 Colchester Drive, Oakville, Ontario, CANADA L6J 5S6. CANADAPA is getting a new CM soon.

AN APA DIRECTORY

Lester Boutillier (2726 Castiglion St., New Orleans, LA 70119) is compiling and publishing a directory (which I think he'll call SOUTH OF THE MOON as a continuation of Andy Sigel's zine) of apas. If you have any information on apas, or would like to order the directory and find out even more apas, write to Lester.

Plus if you have news of apas, new apas that aren't listed here, please write to me and I'll publish them here in AFTA. I wan AFTA to be the fan's zine, and there is no activity more fannish than being involved i an APA.

If you have any fan news, any names of fa editors who might want to trade with AFTA, or reviews of new fan magazines on the scene, please report the information to AFTA first. I want AFTA to be the central clearinghouse for information onthe fan press. And you can help.

Send all news on apas to Bill-Dale Marcinko, RPO 5009, Rutgers U, New Brunswick, NJ 08903. I was thinking of starting a Monty Python/America 2-Night/ humor apa with original humor and strips (of a general, satiric, or fannish nature (i.e. FANDOM FUNNIES)), and also run review articles and whatever for humor fans-- Mary Hartman, Mary Hartman, Fernwood/Americ 2-Night, Monty Python, Firesign Theater, T Goons, Steve Martin, Smothers Brothers, Le Bruce, Lily Tomlin, Robert Klein being som of my favorites. How many of you would be interested in taking part? Raise your hands

ZINE CONVENE

STOP IT SPIM!!
raisin

A LISTING OF FAN MAGAZINES

Welcome all. Good news this issue. AFTA got voted into the UFO (United Fanzine Organization), a co-op for fanzine editors of quality fanzines. Therefore, without further ado, THE UFO CHECKLIST...

THE UFO CHECKLIST

The United Fanzine Organization (UFO) is a co-op of fanzine editors who mutually aid each other in the production and promotion of their fanzines. The members of the UFO trade zines with each other and receive free advertising through the UFO Checklist, which appears in each member-zine. The UFO requires its members to maintain a high standard of quality; when ordering from a UFO Checklist you can be certain that these are mong the best fan publications available.

The UFO encourages diversity in its ranks; its member-zines appeal to a wide variety of interests. All current UFO fanzines are available from the UFO Chairman, Jay Zilber (220 E. 85th Street, Apt. 5R, New York, NY 10028), or from their individual publishers. Back issues are available only from their respective publishers. All fanzines are postpaid.

Fan editors and publishers interested in joining the United Fanzine Organization should contact its current chairman, Jay Zilber.

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AFTA 2 The official newsletter of the Save the Raisin Foundation. A free raisin picked not by migrant farm workers, but by fat, rich, and senitent executives, stuff on comics and films too.

("Oh, Spim. You did it! Get outta here! I'm just voted into the UFO, and I try to run the Checklist, and you come up with this raisin bit. I can't leave my typewriter for five minutes to go into the bathroom and take some drugs without you typing in raisin-this, RAISIN-THAT!!!! I HATE RAISINS. I'm sorry, Jay, will you forgive me? Please!!??" --Bill-Dale)

BATMANIA 23 One of the oldest fanzines still being published since it was revived by Rich Morrissey, Batmania is dedicated to the fans who enjoy reading and collecting the adventures of Batman and Robin. This issue branches into related atopics as well, featuring an exclusive discussion with Gardner Fox on his comics writing career for DC and other publishers. Other features include: Jay Zilber's regular UPDATE column, this time reviewing the tabloid edition of Batman vs. Ras al Ghul; reviews of Mike Fleisher's Batman and Wonder Woman encylopedia by Tom Fagan and Alan Turniansky; Martin Lock takes a look at Batman in Brave & Bold; "The Legend of Two-Face" by John D. Hemmings; plus a brief interview with TV's Joker, Cesar Romero. Usual features and letters round out the issue, superb graphics and artwork abound, by the top talents of fandom. 28 offset pages, $1.00 from the UFO Chairman, or from Rich Morrissey, 55 Claudette Circle, Framingham, MA 01701

ENDEAVOR 13 If you've ever wondered what future professional writers and artists do before they become pros, you'd do well to pick up Kurt Erichsen's Endeavor. Each issue features a collection of fan fiction by some of the most talented up-and-coming writers around, and this issue is no exception. Endy 13 features the fourth in the series of "Adventures of Eringodes Plostheropaba" tales of Atlantean fandom, this installment spolighting the earliest test run of THE FAN MACHINE. Also this issue: "Find A Different Dream...Or Die," a sadly familiar tale about a would-be comics artist by Frank Watson, Rich Bruning, and Sharon Van Sluys; and more top-notch fiction by Dale Nelson, David McDonnell, and Greg Swan. Regular features include "Reactions," Endy's long and chatty letter column, and other short fillers. The entire issue is profusely illustrated by Kurt Erichsen, Cliff Kurowski, Dale Nelson, and others. Covers by George Erling and Tim Lynch. Endeavor is also one of the Last Great Mimeozines, containing some of the best color mimeography to be found in fandom or anywhere else. Offset covers, 76 pages, $1.35 from the U.F.O. Chairman, or from Kurt Erichsen, 1580 W. Myrtle Avenue, Coos Bay, OR 97420.

ENTROPY COSMIX 3 & 4 Two fanzines for the price of one! EC #3 is a "Special Humor Issue," and contains a variety of satiric, witty, and generally amusing comic strips and cartoons: SYCAMORE SEASERPENT by Clay Fourier; THE DINOS by Paul Absi; and a parody of the popular Marvel series, MASTER OF KUNG GU, a McDonnell-Saito-Limacher collaboration. Filler strips and cartoons also. EC #4 features "Violent Woman", a cosmic tale of a paradoxed man and the catalyst which brings him to mental re-awakening. In experimental sonnet/graphic format, for open-minded people everywhere. Both issues of Entropy Cosmix are offset, 8½ x 5½, 40 pages total, 75¢ for both zines from the UFO Chairman, or from Bill Mutschler, 500 Crestview Road, Wayne, PA 19087.

FANDOM FUNNIES 3 (THE BUYER'S GOD) Fandom Funnies is a parody-zine which lampoons other well-known comics fanzines. This tabloid-size issue parodies a typical issue of The Buyer's Guide, with its regular features: "Lead Balloons," by Don and Maggie Married (Bill Sherman, Jay Zilber, and Roger Caldwell); "So What?" by Murray Blastoff (Harry Broertjes) "Crucifier Comments" by Martin Grime (Mike Valerio and Tom Hegeman), and the rest of TBG's columnists. Plus advertisements which must be seen to be believed (including the classic "Jack Kirby SCHOOL of Modern Comics WRITING"), and a revealing interview with Alan Right. Also: a new Ear-Fall-Off Floyd portfolilo and an assortment of other regular Fandom Funnies features. Covers by Bill Sherman, Kurt Erichsen, and interior graphics by Jim McPherson, Rich Bruning, Ron Harris, Al Williamson (swiped by Martin Grime). The Buyer's God is easily the funniest zine of the year 1977. 28 pages, 11 x 17 offset on newsprint for $1.00 from Jay Zilber.

GLX SPTZL GLAAH! 1 Sheldon Mayer began his career in the late 1930s as the artist/writer of SCRIBBLY, BOY CARTOONIST. Eventually he moved onto funny animals, and then wrote and drew 98 issues of Sugar & Spike. Artist...writer...editor...Shelly Mayer is one of the finest comics geniuses ever, easily on the same level as Carl Barks or John Stanley, and now there's a fanzine devoted to the artistry of Sheldon Mayer. Glx Sptzl Glaah! 1 premieres with a never-before-published essay by author Ron Goulart

ZINE CONVENE (continued)

on "Scribbly;" Mark Evanier discusses Mayer's personal approach to humor; Gary Brown "interviews" now-retired Patsy Mouse from Mayer's famed THREE MOUSEKETEERS strip; and Rich Morrissey takes an in-depth look at one of S.M.'s more recent creations, The Black Orchid. Also included are examples of rare, unpublished Mayer artwork, and information on the Revive Sugar and Spike movement. If you're a Mayer fan, this is what you've been waiting for...and if you're not one yet, you will be long before you finish reading Glx. 28 offset pages, 8½ x 11, only 60¢ by mail from the UFO Chairman, or from Ken Gale, 220 E. 85th Street #5-R, New York, NY 10028 (actually that is Jay's new address, since he is living with Ken, well, not living with him, but you know what I mean)

GRAPHEX 4 The all-star fourth issue of Graphex opens with part 2 of the Doug Moench/Don McGregor interview; as always, revealing new insights into the minds of two of the most controversial writers in comics today. Also featured this issue, "The Life and Times of WARLOCK," by Larry Twiss, a thought-provoking overview of Jim Starlin's highly-acclaimed series. Plus -- "The Condor" stars in an 8-page Herzog/Iro/Mutschler-produced fan strip, and Jim Steranko is showcased in a series of previously unpublished pencil drawings and roughs. Interior art credits read like a "Who's Who" of top fan and pro talents; covers by Pete Iro and Rudy Nebres. Graphex has been described as the "architypical" UFO fanzine... 34 offset pages, 8½ x 11, $1.50 from the UFO Chairman, or from Bill Mutschler, 500 Crestview Road, Wayne, PA 19087. Check it out!

LUDICROUS SITUATIONS, LTD. 5 LSLtd is a general-purpose humorzine full of comics, photo pieces, prose, parody, and snappy irreverence. This latest issue, in the new 24-page wraparound format, contains, "Mall," a Bill Sherman comic of death and shopping; "His New Post" by Dan LeSeure, concerning a has been Republican politico's experiences on a Big City Newspaper; "Cancer Scare," a plausible piece of teevee exploitation centering around America's Favorite Disease (by Sherman); and the Overstock Book Catalog, with all the books you never wanted to read sold cheap (by Sherman, LeSeure, and Ken Mottet). Miscellaneous illustrations by George Erling, Hugh Mason, and Robert Sutherland round the issue out--along with a blatently egocentric one-pager on "Unknown Talents of the LSLtd. Staff" (in the tradition of P.J. O'Rourke!) and the lyrics to "Stockbroker Blues" from THE TALKING CREEPING-SOCIALISM-WELFARE-STATE BLUES SONGBOOK. Ludicrous Situations, Ltd. is both bizarre and biting, a fun experience all around. Offset on newsprint, 8½ x 11, 24 wraparound pages for only 65¢ by mail from the UFO Chairman, or from Bill Sherman, 608 E. Douglas #2, Bloomington, IL 61701. PS: There is nothing in the issue about Larry Flynt.

RADION 6 The emphasis in Radion is on interviews, this time peering into the minds of Tom Batiuk (of "Funky Winkerbean") and book cover artist Michael Wheelan, who discusses his background, his work, and getting screwed over by Marvel. Ron Goulart discusses his books, his many pseudonyms, Weird Heroes, sf, and future projects. (Along with the Goulart interview is a checklist of his work, a scorecard of pseudonyms, and the first three episodes of Star Hawks.) In other features, Douglas Herring discusses "The Doom Of The Eternals" and Tom Mason blatantly self-indulges in an editorial. Covers by William Neville/Sam De La Rosa, and Doug Herring; other interior illos by Tom Batiuk, William Black, Willie Blyberg, Alan Weiss, and others. All offset, 36 8½ x 11 pages, $1.00 from the UFO Chairma or from Tom Mason, 705 Draper Road, Blacksburg, VA 24060

TETRAGRAMMATON FRAGMENTS! TF is the Officia Newsletter of the United Fanzine Organization. This newslette apa was founded in 1970 and continues today in its fourth volume under Chairman Jay Zilb TF is published monthly and on time, featuring the official business of the UFO, review of current UFOzines and an up-to-date Checklist, lots of behind-the-scenes fannish netter, personal gab, occasional feuds, and other fun goings-on between the members of the UFO. 15-30 ditto pages, 50¢ or 4/$1.50 from Jay Zilber, 220 E. 85th St., Apt. 5R, New York, NY 10028.

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STILL AVAILABLESTILL AVAILABLESTILL AVAILAB

Batmania #22 ($1.00) from Rich Morrissey
Endeavor #7 ($1.50), #8 (50¢), #9($1.00), #10 ($1.40) #11 ($1.00), #12 (75¢) from Kurt Erichsen
The Comics Journal #27, 29-36 ($1.00 each) from Gary Groth
Entropy Cosmix #2 (40¢) from Bill Mutschler
Graphex #2, 3 (80¢ @) from Bill Mutschler
Ludicrous Situations, Ltd. #3,4 (75¢ @) fro Bill Sherman
Radion #4 (65¢), #5 (75¢) from Tom Mason
TETRAGRAMMATON FRAGMENTS! Vol. 3, #31-37 (30
Vol. 4, #1-8 (50 from Jay Zilber
AFTA #1($1.50) from Bill Marcinko
Chicago's GRAPHICS REVIEW #1 (75¢) from Th Morrissey, 4637 W. 99th Pl., Oak Lawn, IL 60453
Omniverse #1 ($1.75) from Mark Gruenwald, 211 W. 88th Street, #3-A, New York, NY 10024

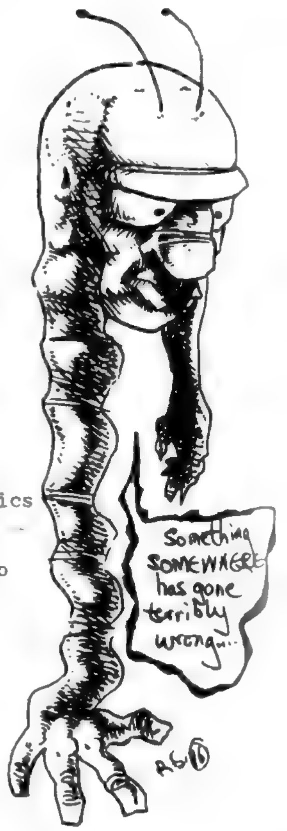
Thom Morrissey just got admitted last month, too, with Chicago's Graphics Review.

Radion #7 is out now, available from Tom Mason.

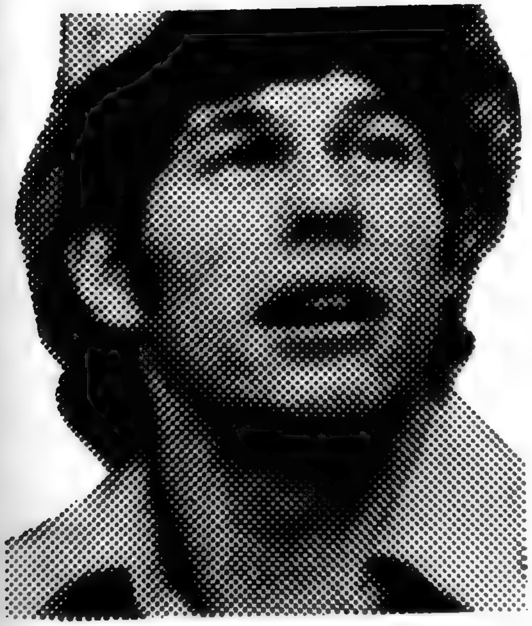
Jay Zilber promises a second issue of GLX SPTZL GLAAH! out any day now, and FANDOM FUNNIES #4, which will be a parody of The Comics Journal out this fall.

Any editors who want to join the UFO, please write to Jay Zilber!!! Now, to the reviews. First, some by Paul A. Flores, 3551 Victory Dr.#308-F, Columbus, GA 31903.

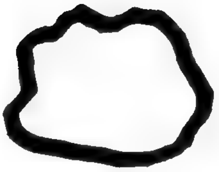
Go to it, Paul...


Something SOMEWHERE has gone terribly wrong...
AGB

A



B



SPECIAL AFTA CONTEST-- GUESS WHICH ONE IS MURRAY AND WHICH ONE IS THE ROCK.

1. I think Murray Bishoff is:
   (1) "A" (2) "B" (3) "stupid"
2. I think the rock is:
   (1) "A" (2) "B"

First prize... a free college freshman course in English composition.

Second prize... Special Driver's Training Institute "Asshole" training

Third prize... Getting your TBG sub cancelled mysteriously.

THRUST - SF IN REVIEW, 52 pp., slick cover & newsprint, published 2 times a year;print run-2,000, $1.50, sub-4/$5.00, Editor & Publisher: Doug Fratz. Published by Thrust Publications, PO Box 746, Adelphi, MD 20783. // Like AFTA, Thrust is a moneylosing labor of love. It's the best fanzine available anywhere that takes a critical look at SF Writers and sf literature. This is the ideal fanzine for the fan who enjoys SF in the form of stories and books. Issue #10 has an interview with writer Kirby McCauley, who tales about the business side of SF. Isaac Asimov's speech at the '77 Commencement of the University of Maryland is transcribed, he talks about war, world crises, and the future. Writer and fan ed Ted White has another installment of My Column, which was dropped from ALGOL a while back, he tells about how he first became a writer. Dave Bischoff also writes about how and why he became a SF writer. Dave Bischoff also writes about how and why he became a SF writer. There are a couple of other articles on SF writing, a lot of book reviews, plenty of art, and a letter from Harlan Ellison.

HAMMER'S HOUSE OF HORROR, 52 pp., slick cover; monthly; $1.00, Editor: Dez Skinn. Published by Top Sellers Ltd., Columbia-Warner House, 135-141 Wardour St., London W1V 4QA, England. // This imported horror movie magazine from England should be available at most newsstands. The first American issue features an interview with George Romero, part one of History of Hammer Films (1935-1956), a review of The Conqueror Worm, the actual story boards from the Psycho shower scene, a comic strip adaption of Curse of the Werewolf, and a look at Karloff's role as the Frankenstein monster. HoH should prove to be considerable competition for James Warren's FAMOUS MONSTERS. ("Anything is considerable competition to FM." --Bill-Dale)

FANTASTIC FILMS, 72 pp., slick, bi-monthly; $2.00, sub-$10.00, Editor/Publisher: Irv Karchmar. Published by Blake Publishing Corp., 2701 W. Howard St., CHicago, IL 60645. // One of the first of many SF film magazines started by the Star Wars and Close Encounters craze, and of the better. No. 3 has interviews with Douglas Trumbull, Susan Sackett, John Dykstra, and Kenny Baker. Woody Allen offers his opinion on UFO's, the alien languages of Star Wars are translated, the hand weapons of SW are blue-printed, and in the middle of it all is a poster showing the most famous spaceships from SF movies of the past few years.

LITTLE SHOPPE OF HORRORS, 138 pp.; glossy paper; irregular (very); $3.00, Richard E. Klemensen, 707 Greenbrier Road, Waterloo, IA 50703 // Issue #4, which took Dick 4 years to get around to publishing, surprised many fans, who thought LITTLE SHOPPE OF HORRORS disappeared into the oblivion like so many other fine film fanzines. Dick is a Hammer Film freak, and this issue is almost all Hammer oriented with: Hammer: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow: filmography; and interviews with Hammer's producers, directors, writers, technicians, actors, and anyone else Dick could get his hands on who is associated with the film company. There is also an interview with Dave Prowse, and a study of Hammer's Dracula films by film fandom writer Gary Dorst. Lots of fotos, some art (including Dick's "Ralph of the Vampyres") and some fanzine reviews (some a wee bit outdated) This issue is a tremendous improvement over the previous three issues. Recommended.

("I want to thank Dick for plugging AFTA #1 in a supplemental newsletter he sent along with LSoH #4." --Bill-Dale)

FANDOM UNLIMITED, 44pp., photo-offset; irregular; $2.00, Randall D. Larson, 774 Vista Grande Av., Los Altos, CA 94022 // Randall is the head of Fandom Unlimited Enterprises, which publishes several high-quality fanzines once or twice a year. These fanzines are dedicated to fantasy, horror and science fiction in literature, films and art. FANDOM UNLIMITED #2 features an article on H.P. Lovecraft's Cthuihu Mythos, an interview with Fredric Wertham, Conan in the Comics, Belgian fantasy author Jean Ray, fiction and book reviews. Issue #3 continues some of the features started in #2, and has an interview with James Blish, a profile of Sprague de Camp, S & S in comics, and film reviews. They are $2.00 each.

("Randall will soon be publishing REBORN, a fanzine examining sf & fantasy from a Christian viewpoint." --Bill-Dale)

Not a fanzine, but...

THE COLLECTOR'S GUIDE TO MONSTER MAGAZINES, 124pp.; glossy paper; $7.95 plus $1.00 post. Bob Michelucci, Dept. B-1, 211 Fort Pitt Blvd., Pittsburgh, PA 15222 // This publication lists all the monster movie magazines

ZINE CONVENE (continued)

ever published in this country from 1958 to the present. It includes over 400 b & w and color cover reproductions, and each issue's supposed market value, based on the editor's research, who is attempting to help organize these magazines in much the same way Bob Overstreet 'helped' organize comic prices. This first edition has interviews with Forry Ackerman and CINEFANTASTIQUES Fred Clark. Each magazine's title has a short article concerning it.
("Ah, for the days of '68, before thePrice Guide. Anarchy, beautiful anarchy..." -B.D.)

THE OLD DARK HOUSE, George LaVoo, 9368 Brecksville Road, Brecksville, OH 44141, $2.00, 52 pages, offset, interior pages are tinted blue (which doesn't help the rather sloppy layout any). // Issue #2 features the first part of a filmbook on The Day The Earth Stood Still, which is transcribed directly from the movie; 3 pages of typical Star War's fotos (you've seen them a hundred times); a study of German Horror and Fantasy Films from 1913 to 1920; film reviews (e.g. Demon Seed, Spy Who Loved Me, The Car); a fine interview with Don Dohler, concerning his new SF film, THE ALIEN FACTOR. Don is also editor and publisher of CINEMAGIC magazine, and has, with the help of some of his contributors, created a new company called Cinemagic Visual Effects. Also in this issue are a few book reviews and letters.

FANTARAMA, Vaughn Fraser and Barbara Prezeklasa, Pubbing Press Publications, 11220 Bird Road, Richmond, B.C. V6X 1N8, 50¢, 6-$3.00, 12-$5.00; tabloid, newsprint, 20 pages; every six weeks. // Concentrates on the movies, books, and comics that are made in Canada. #5 features a long article on computers and on how they are becoming so easily available in our society. It's a little out of place in a fanzine, but it's still interesting; a short column by Dale Hammell that studies what makes up a convention: short review on Close Encounters by George Browne, whose also co-editor of Fantasy Unlimited; interview with Canadian cartoonist Arn Saba; lots of cartoon strips with short bios on some of the cartoonists; letters and a crossword puzzle.

PHOBOS, victor Gates, PO Box 3432, Santa Monica, CA 90403, $1.00, 42 pages, newsprint with slick covers; quarterly. // Interviews with John Carpenter (Dark Star, Assault on Precinct 13) and Dan O'Bannon (Dark Star, special effects in Star Wars); Robert Altman's 3 Women review; a fiction tale by Bob Greenburg; and lotsa film reviews. Of special interest to Moebius (of Heavy Metal fame) fans, there are some sketches for a proposed film of Frank Herbert's DUNE, that was to be made in France (but was dropped).

AMRA, The Sword & Sorcery Magazine, The Terminus, Owiswick, & Ft. Mudge Electrick Street Railway Gazette (I kid you not), Box 8343, Philadelphia, PA 19101, 75¢, 10-$6.00, 20 pages, 7" x 10", irregular. // Dedicated to S & S and good old Conan. Vol. 2 #67 has an informal interview with Conan (conducted by a time traveller), and a review of the Planet pulp magazine of so long ago. This issue also has discussions on Conan's upcoming film career, and book reviews by L. Sprague de Camp.

COBBLESTONE, Phil Yeh, Fragments West, 3908 E. 4th St., Long Beach, CA 90814, $1.50, 6-$7.50; 58 pp., newsprint with slick covers; quarterly. // Phil tries to cover as much SF, comics, and Fandom as he can. Issue #28 Vol. 3 has an interview with Harlan Ellison, in which he doesn't reveal much other than that he likes The Gong Show; interview with Eleanor Norris Keaton (wife of a silent movie comedian); conversation with George Lucas; 9 SF writers give their opinions of Star Wars; article on Jack Katz and The First Kingdom; 5 pages of Harlan the Duck (Harlan Ellison as Howard); lots of good art, poems, and other features. This one's got potential.

COMIC MEDIA, Nick Landau & Richard Burton, 4718 N. 9th St., Philadelphia, PA 19141, 75¢, 4-$3.00, 44 pp., newsprint with slick covers, semi-annually. // One of the better fanzines from England. This should be of interest to anyone who likes to see how the fans in another country do things. #11 has a long interview with Sydney Jorden, creator of Britain's Jeff Hawke sf comic strip; comic strips of The Seekers and Modestly Blaise; a Will Eisner's Spirit reprint called The Leprachaun; an article on Diabolik, who is a master criminal featured in a digest-sized comic book in Italy; and art book reviews.

--Paul A. Flores
3551 Victory Dr. #308-F, Columbus, GA 31903.

("And now part of a letter from Perry M. Brenner, PO Box 160, Evergreen, CO 80459, about Perry Rhodan fanzines. DOES anybody care?" --Bill-Dale)

TERRANIAN TIMES is put out bi-monthly, or maybe quarterly by Kevin Erdman, at 6902 Sunland Drive, Fort Wayne, IN 46815. Costs 35¢ an ish, $2.00 for 6. Perry Rhodan zine news mostly. 5 8½ x 14 pages.
THE INFINITY FLIGHT was due to come out the end of May for 50¢, by John P. Hensley, at Star Route Box 80, Edna, TX 77957. Don't know the specs on this one, but should have a story in it by a certain Nathan Brindle. These two are basically Perry Rhodan fanzines. I've heard that many people put PR down, people that probably haven't read much, if any, of this series, which is, I believe, the longest series ever written,over 800-900 issues in Germany, 120 here in America. (They will be back in publication here in America soon, probably, and available throug subscription only from Kris Darkon, at 2495 Glendower Av., Hollywood, CA 90027. The first issue out will be no. 119, earlier issues having been published by ACE, who dropped it because they weren't selling as much as ACE wanted them to, selling about 100,000 of each issue.

RIP OFF

("One of AFTA's own artists has been screwed by a certain Mike Swanson of MIDNITE ELF PUBLICATIONS. I am printing Doug Hazelwood' letter here in AFTA, hoping that someone can get to Swanson, or that if you have some spare change and want to help out a fellow artist (not to mention Jim Main and Gene Day), drop this fool a letter. If anyone else has complaints against Swanson, send them to me, and I'll send them, and Doug's letter to the WSA and see what they can do. Apparently Alan Light has no interest in helping the fans out who have been dicked over by the people who advertise in his zine. So, I hope in some way, AFTA can take the place, along with the WSA, of PUBLICIZING complai like this and getting things worked out. If YOU have any complaints, please, please, I want to help out, and I will. Seems nobody else wants to." --Bill-Dale)

ZINE CONVENE (continued)

This is a complaint about Mike Swanson from Doug Hazelwood, PO Box 3762, Victoria, TX 77901, to wit:

He has over 10 original illustrations of mine, and even more that I only inked and he won't give 'em back! That son-of-a-bitch first wrote to me about two years ago soliciting art for his "soon-to-be-published" LIZARD BREATH fanzine and even sooner-to-be-published KURIOSITY. Well, I inked some pro sketches for him and sent him some of my illoes and I made it clear all along that I would want the originals back. When I would write and ask Mike why I hadn't heard from him in quite awhile he would say he had written months ago...the letter must have been lost. Once he said, "or maybe you mislaid it"!! Huh? To make a long story short, his letters started coming fewer and farther between and now he won't even reply to certified letters he has signed for. He screwed Jim Main out of a whole issue of GNOME, laid out and ready to print. They had made an agreement to split the print run of GNOME #2 if Jim assembled it and Mike printed it. No such luck, as Swanson kept giving Jim his patented excuses or "no answer" answers. Some of his excuses are alughable, but this mess isn't. He also screwed Gene Day out of $100 worth of original art. Both Jim and Gene have some "nice" things to say about Mike. I've sent Mike THREE certified letters with return receipts, an S.A.S.E., and promises to reimburse him for any expenses to send my art back. But no, Mike won't answer. I KNOW he got all three certified letters, as I got all of the return receipts back SIGNED by him. I've written to TBG about Swanson, as he DID advertise for advance orders to LIZARD BREATH in TBG, so I imagine that there are some unhappy folks out there who never got their copies of this "non-zine". KURIOSITY supposedly had been printed, but Mike first was waiting months for a stapler big enough to staple them together (for real!) Then he said he would mail me my copies (because I supposedly had some illoes in it) after the Christmas rush... well that was a year and a half ago. Uh, I think the rush is over Mike. Whenever I would bring up the subject SPECIFICALLY about KURIOSITY #1, Swanson would simply avoid the subject entirely or say, "Hey, have I sent you a copy of KURIOSITY #1 yet? #2 will be out in December..." Well, I've offered to help him finish laying out the zine, I've offered to pay him to photostat the originals and send either the originals or the stats to me, I've offered to reimburse him for any postage/mailing expenses, but no such luck. And Mike is/was a WSA member!!! And he stated so in his TBG ads-- WSA #282 and IFICC member. I don't know how many others he screwed, but I'm sure there are quite a few. He solicited those illustrations from me under false or at least misleading pretenses! He hasn't published either fanzine and apparently never will. He did live in Hauppauge, NY and got his mail in near-by St. James:

MIKE SWANSON
c/o Midnite Elf Publications
PO Box 344
St. James, NY 11780

That was the address I knew him from. He has moved to South Carolina and signed for my last certified letter to him there:

MIKE SWANSON
112 Barrington Blvd.
Foxborough Sub. Div.
Goose Creek, SC 29445

I want my drawings back!! They are my property and I want them back from that crook! I don't know if Light/TBG will do anything, and I believe Gene Day has reported him to WE/WSA, but I don't think the whole story has been unearthed yet. There must be others out there who have complaints/gripes against Mike Swanson, too. I just hope something can be done, but I'm not holding my breath. I wrote an official, detailed complaint to Dynapubs, complete with xeroxes of evidence. I have saved every bit of correspondence that Mike ever sent me, so I can back up my claims. If TBG can't or won't do anything, I at least wanted their OK to denounce him in print in TBG... I've given him more than enough chances and time to come clean... he just won't. HELP!

--Doug Hazelwood

("So, let's help out Doug already. Any leads on this case, channel through me to the WSA." --Bill-Dale)

Hello, this is Bill-Dale, and it is time for my reporting of the news and reviews in the fan press. About reviewing fanzines, some of you have mentioned that I am not critical enough, that there were a lot of fanzines last issue that deserved damning and I didn't. I'm sorry, Ican't. I don't think any fanzine is "worthless" (and RBCC has a number rating corresponding to that term). Even the worst crudzine has at least a few supporters. Also, I don't believe it is my right, as a publisher to damn other people viciously in print, when I know all too well, how things can go wrong when you are putting together a fanzine. Since very few people work on this full time, the demands on your time are just overwhelming, and if you don't have a strong will, things go wrong, mediocre work is printed because you had trouble getting contributors. If someone who has got years and years of experience publishing all types of fanzines is willing to do a reviewzine and give more or less "honest and critical" reviews to zines, let them. I do make suggestions to fan editors, but only in private, never in print here in AFTA. I think every fanzine has the capability to be really top-notch. Instead of damning someone outright (which I can only do to someone who is in the field solely to make a profit), I think we should make suggestions, and offer our time and money to help out. So what will my reviews look like? Well, some of them will be, in effect,just a listing. For the fiction zines, which I don't feel qualified enough to judge, little more than names and addresses. What I will do to clue you in on which fanzines I feel are PARTICULARLY NOTEWORTHY is that for those, I will rave on wildly. As for the others...

But before I begin, some announcements and updates from today's mail.

//I just got a letter from Bell Telephone informing me that I will not be able to have a phone installed in the dorm I'm living in next year at Rutgers (Demarest). Drat! This will make things very difficult. I'll have to designate a phone booth my own. Oh, well, gone are the late night fannish conversations...

//I also got a letter from Marilyn Bethke giving me a little more info on her fanzine. I mentioned it on page 53, after O'Connell's column. Add to that, the following info:

ZINE CONVENE (continued)

The magazine will be ready by July Con. It's called SEDUCTION OF THE INNOCENT #1 (after their store), and it is available for $1.00, plus 25¢ first class postage. Margaret O'Connell has an article called "Writing Superheroines the Marvel Way." Also, Marilyn will be quoting the SEXISM AND RED SONJA article in AFTA #1 in her zine. from Marilyn Bethke, 146 Witherspoon, Princeton, NJ 08540.

//Also got the latest TF, the UFO newsletter, and it seems that Lari Davidson (FANZINES CLASSIFIED), Vaughn Fraser (FANTARAMA) and Charles Spanier & Ken Gale (WEIRD FAAN FICTION) are also applying for membership. Robert Jennings (THE COMIC WORLD) is now a UFO member, just got voted in. Now, if Gary Groth would just run the UFO Checklist in TCJ...'

ALTERNATIVE ADZINES

TBG has raised their rates again, both for ads and subs, in honor of that, I'm doing a report on some alternatives to running ads. I have nothing against the Buyer's Guide or Alan (in fact, Alan & I are good friends); TBG has its market. I do not openly support monopolies, and I think that any zine starting out should be given a fair chance at finding a market. Here are the current contenders:

SUPERZINE, Chris Lareau, Box 286, Brighton, MA 02135, 20 pages, 5½ x 8½, offset, weekly, 50¢ per, 52 issues (1 year)-$7.50. // Published on schedule promptly, in its 10th issue, circulation not listed, SUPERZINE does offer a very attractive benefit: free advertising, taking the form of either classified ads or a collector's listing service, in which you list the comics or whatever you want to sell on a printed, standardized form, and your listing is typed up within the issue. Your ad runs free for two weeks, but you can always resubmit it again, yielding, in effect, unlimited advertising. I have yet to place an ad (although I will run a classified for AFTA 2 soon) to find the results, but this zine is neat, uncluttered, and although nothing yet, has real potential.

COLLECTORS' CLASSIFIED, Rosalie & Bill Margolin, PO Box 347, Holbrook, MA 02343, 28 pages, monthly, 40¢ (1st class), subs-12-$2.50 (bulk), 12-$3.30 (third), 12-$4.50 (first), // the staple here is cheap, and plentiful classified listings. Bill & Rosalie retype your classified, charging you 2¢ a word (3¢ CAPITALIZED), plus they give you free ad coupons to place a number of free 35-word ads (three, usually) in future issues while your sub is in force. Many ads from stamp and coin collectors, too.

MEET THE DEALERS, Frank Verzyl, PO Box 711, Lindenhurst, NY 11757, 24-30 pages, tabloid newsprint, free // Ad rates are much lower than TBG ($20 a full page to TBG's $50, $5 1/8 pg. to TBG's $7), layout has improved tremendously, due primarily to the help of Tom (ASTRAL COMICS) Sciacca, and MTD is on the way up. Frank claims 5000 readers, in a different league from TBG (Frank distribs to bookstores, conventions (esp. in the New York area where you can pick up a copy for no charge), and a special mailing list (ask to be put on it). Now that TCJ has got bookstore distribution and gone newszine, MTD is TBG's main competition. Good luck.

FANDOM TRADER, Bobby Sommerkamp, 1803 Bayou Grande Blvd NE, St. Pete, FL 33703, 20-30 8½ x 11 pages, monthly, $1.00, offset. // This is the most exciting of the new adzines only because Bobby is so dedicated and enthusiastic. He truly wants to establish FANDOM TRADER as the center of advertising for the FAN press (where SUPERZINE goes for smaller collectors, Collector's Classified for coin and stamp people, and MTD for a general TBG audience), and I recommend it without reservation. If you want to know what's happening in fandom, go to FT. Bobby's got ads, letters, reviews of fan publications. He puts it together with an unequalled love and enthusiasm. This can become the true marketplace for fan editors to exchange ideas and products. If you have any interest in fanzines or fandom at all, you MUST send $1.00 to Bobby right now. Fandom Trader is on its way up also, increasing in page count and circulation with every issue. If you don't subscribe to FT, you are missing out on putting an ear to the grass roots of fan publishing.

LULU REVU, Pubbug Press Publications, 11220 Bird Road, Richmond, BC CANADA V6X 1N8. 8-$3.00. // Lulu fills the gap that GEORGE made when it was cancelled-- that of a zine which publishes recent and accurate fanzine reviews. Each issue brings a few dozen reviews (in 12-20 pages) in an attractive 8½ x 11 format. The reviews by Lari Davidson, Vaughn Fraser, and Dale Hammell, and are intelligent, informative, and well done. You must have this zine (it has already published 2 issues). If you publish a zine, send it to them for review NOW.

ALTERNATE CIRCUITS, Lee Wochner, RD #2, Box 185a, Absecon, NJ 08201, 15 pages, mimeo, bi-monthly, single copy price-15¢ / Lee has got a gutsy, clever, charming little zine on his hands. At a stamp, anything would be good, but this is well worth, heck, two, maybe, three stamps, and possibly even an envelope. Seriously, Lee is outrageously opinionated, and his staff, Richard Fifield and Rich Roeberg can write well. In all, this makes AC a must for everyone. In #7, the March/April issue, the last one I received, Lee reviews comics, books, zines, and records (including a Martin Mull album, this guy's got taste, for sure)-- his review are succinct and well executed. Another high point of the issue is THE COWDUNG MYTHOS by Rich Roesberg, in which he takes apart, in Woody Allen-style humor, Conan and Sonja and other barbarian cliches. Lee also does a few "FANDOM TRADING CARDS" chronicling famous moments in fandom history. Great. As you can see, I love AC. Buy it.

AFAE BSAAMETO, David Lewison, 428 Via Los Miradores, Redondo Beach, CA 90277, (12 pages, xerox, irregular, single copy price-two 15¢ stamps or 30¢ per.) // Wonderful little personalzine with a steady conversational tone, reviews of movies and sf books, plus letters. Most of the stuff is done by David, who has a zany, irrelevant style of writing. These are the kind of fanzines I like. Latest issue is #3.

THE BARKS COLLECTOR, John Nichols, Box 1906, Suffolk, VA 23434 (32 pages, 7" x 8½", offset, bi-monthly, 6-$6.00) // Excellent zine devoted to Carl Barks, articles, indexes, reviews and recollections, and advertisement for the hard-core Barks fan, although

INE CONVE E (continued)

itten clearly and understandably nough for those with just a slight nterest. The last issue I received 7 (Jan. 1978) has got a Barks index WALT DISNEY COMICS DIGEST, plus cute retelling of the first ten crooge stories, and Horst Schroder's eport on Disney in Europe.

HE DUCKBURG TIMES, Paul Anderson III, 407 Spring Creek, Laramie, WY 82070, 20 pages, 5½ x 8½, offset, irregular, 1.00, accepts ads) // A zine devoted to he works of Carl Barks and Walt Disney. lthough thinner in enjoyment than THE ARKS COLLECTOR, still of interest to arks and Disney fans. Ads, too.

armond Hughey reports that his and eed Sturdivant's BASIC project (a aped fanzine with an art flyer) is ermanently disabled. Harmond may be nterested in reviving it, write to him t Rt. 1, Box 442, Kenton, TN 38233.

BLACK ORACLE, George Stover, PO Box 0005, Baltimore, MD 21204 (48 pages, ¼ x 5½, (and you thought the print in FTA was small, wait till you see BO), 0¢, 3-$2.00) // I regret that George's lossoming career in film acting (he has ow appeared in CINEMAGIC's THE ALIEN ACTOR, and Water's DESPERATE LIVING) may ut a crimp in BLACK ORACLE's future. BO s a fine, fine, reviewzine of fantastic ilms (with just enough art, and poetry sprinkled throughout to spice it up). The riting is perceptive and intelligent, he layout is attractive and slick (but illiputian). BO #10 (Spring 1977) eatured reviews on King Kong, The Omen urnt Offerings, Carrie, Logan's Run, nd many other films issued at that time. eorge may still have some copies left of 10. Worth your while to check it out.

CASCADE COMIX MONTHLY, Artie Romero, 32 S. Cascade Av., Colorado Springs, CO 0903 (16 pages, 5½ x 8½, offset, with some terrific color work on the covers, monthly, 50¢, 6-$2.50) // Letters, news, articles and interviews on underground comix; much more attractive than Geerdes' COMIX WORLD and possibly soon just as comprehensive. The ish Artie sent me (#2, April 1978) had a very interesting interview with Larry Todd. Get this if you are a comix freak.

CINEMAGIC, Don Dohler, PO Box 125, Perry Hall, MD 21128 (32 pages, slick glossy stock, photos, $2.50, 4-$8.00) // Published quarterly, Cinemagic has features on make-up, models, body suits, and visual effects for filmmakers of sf and fantasy films. Also, a neat a little directory of amateur productions around the country, and a classified section in which you can meet and correspond with other amateur filmmakers of this type. Slick, well-done, albeit for a very esoteric audience. #11 (Fall/Winter 1978) has articles on ball & socket armatures, making full-body monster suits, and reports on Don's film, the ALIEN FACTOR, which is now hunting for a distributor. It is neat,1950's ish sf/monster flick. Watch for it around.

THE COMIC BOOK COLLECTOR, John Harris, 54 Berkshire Drive., Crystal Lake, IL 60014 CBC, after 7 issues, in a 5½ x 8½ hand-written xerox 20 page format has metamorphosized into FAN WORLD, 8½ x 11, xerox and ditto, 6-$1.30, 12-$2.50, #1 (May 1, 1978) features dealer reviews and fanzine reviews. The highlight of #1 is an article on PREZ on Roy Reimer which is quite good.

COMIC CRUSADER STORYBOOK sounds like something which fandom will be talking about for a long time. Published by Martin Greim, Box 132, Dedham, MA 02026, who is now taking advance orders at $8.50 for a BOOK (I feel funny calling it a fanzine) which should blow 'em away, just by the size and professional quality alone. About the quality, any of you who are familiar with COMIC CRUSADER back a few years ago, know that this book will be slick and flawless. About the size, listen up: 168 pages, all new original comic strips: DR. WEIRD, MR. A, THE ECLIPSE, SPACE GUARDIAN, THE EYE, GOODGUY, XAL-KOR, THE HUMAN CAT, THE DEFENDER, Fan and Pro art by guys with names like: Nebres, Giordano, Steranko, Keltner, Cosgrove, Foss, White, Adams, Ditko (a 10 page story with no dialogue that Marty reports is really excellent), Fujitake, Schaffenberger, Newton, Byrne, Green, Kato, Greim, Day, Clement, Machlan,Hanley, Sutton, Staton, Fredericks, color covers, a front cover by Dick Giordano and back cover by Joe Sinnott. This is what Marty has been tucked away doing this last 9 months or so. I'll be watching for this one.

COMIC FAN MEDIA, Craig Berlin, 3737 Arroyo Rd., Fort Worth, TX 76109 (12 pages, front stapled, offset, quarterly, 50¢ @, 4-$2.00) // Homey little faanish zine, with puzzles, trivia quizzes, articles, reviews on a wide variety of subjects. Although the layout is a bit sloppy, and sometimes cramped, it has a personality.

THE COMIC READER, PO Box 255, Menomonee Falls, WI 53051, Jerry Sinkovec and Mike Tiefenbacher, editors (32 pages, side stapled, 5½ x 8½, monthly, color covers, newsprint interior pages, 75¢, 6-$3.50, 12-$7.00) // THE fanzine for anyone who is interested in recent comics. Cover repros, news, coming comics listings for the next month (a good week or two before the first books hit the stands). Totally indispensible.

DIRECT CURRENTS, single large fold out sheet from DC comics listing the coming comics and news for that month. In effect, The Comic Reader with hype and greasy slickness. Put the $4.00 you'd spend on the 12 issues to TCR instead. Graphically superior, but who cares what news looks like?

THE COMIC WORLD, Robert Jennings, RFD 2, Whiting Road, Dudley, MA 01570 (40 pages, saddle stitched, bi-monthly, $1.00, 6-$6.00) // Bob's forte is well-researched, almost enclopedic articles, primarily from Golden Age subjects and characters, although I hear #17 is a double issue which has an excellent article on the ACG comics. Uncluttered layout, if not eye-grabbing, jam packed with facts. #16 (the last ish I got) has as its feature article a history/analysis of Sheena.

THE COMPLATE MONTY PYTHON, Kim "Howard" Johnson, 1411 Cherokee Lane, Ottawa, IL 61350 (52 pages, $1.65 postpaid, 7 x 9½, saddle stitched) I'm not gonna mince metaphors (even mixed ones) with this project. I have a question for you. Are you a Monty Python fan? Answer yes, then get this book. Don't ask any questions. The first volume has an in-depth index of the first season of the tv series, a complete discography, an interview with Michael Palin, profile of Terry Gilliam and Terry Jones, and a trivia quiz, plus photos and natty editorial material.

ZINE CONVENE (continued)

Howard plans two succeeding volumes, covering the rest of the shows, the City Center show, the books, plus the latest news (but then of course, you can get that here in Howard's column IT'S...)

THE COMPLETE EC LIBRARY, Russ Cochran, PO Box 437, West Plains, MO 65775. Russ is embarking upon a valiant ambition, that, to reprint the ENTIRE line of EC comics in hardcover books, shot in black and white from the originals, with each cover reproduced in full color. The first to get the Russ Cochran Treatment (in other words, excellent repro and care so intense it makes you gasp) is WEIRD SCIENCE (all 22 issues). Although the pre-publication price of $40 is now no longer valid, you may get in for $50 or something around that if you write to Russ right now. This is a project of incredible scope and importance, and it deserves our support. The definitive act of the definitive EC fan.

CONVERSATION, Bill Waldroop, PO Box 14084, Detroit, MI 48214 (50 pages, offset, a few pages ditto, stapled in the upper left corner, $1.10 per copy) // I envy this man's ability to do an interview, I really do. This is a friendly, warm zine which earns its title over and over. An interview with Jim Shooter, John Jakes, and Satan himself (yes, you heard it right!), plus fiction, Conning the Barbarian (which I really liked), strips and art and general good atmosphere abounding.

THE DANDELION, Michael E. Coughlin, 1985 Selby Av., St. Paul, MN 55104 (28 pages, 5½ x 8½, quarterly, 4-$3.50) // A libertarian fanzine. The Libertarian Movement is worth looking into, perhaps through the dandelion. Libertarism has its roots in the tyranny of politicians and big government, and works towards a more manageable social set-up through "little government."

THE DIAGONAL RELATIONSHIP, Arthur D. Hlavaty, 250 Coligni Av., New Rochelle, NY 10801 (52 pages, 5½ x 8½, quarterly, $1.00, 4-$4.00, offset) // Easily the most intellectually stimulating fanzine I have had the pleasure of reviewing. It seems out of place here, it really does. Letters, commentary on philosophy, God, sexuality, technology, and much, much more Perfectly outrageous, Arthur's voice coming through the loudest and clearest. SF fans getting together and really talking. Endearing illos. Recommended with every bone in my body, and certain selected muscles. The current issue is #5 (April, 1978). All back issues are available.

Doc Savage Fans! The second issue of THE DOC SAVAGE CLUB READER is now out! 20 8½ x 11 pages offset, for $1.00, 4-$4.00. A must for DocS fans. Articles, news, art (including art by Bill Black and Rudy Nebres).

EC LIFELINE, Don Edwards, 425 North 12th Street, Montebello, CA 90640 (14 pages, front stapled, xerox, $1.00, 3-$4.00) // The sole remaining organ for EC fandom. Don Edwards has a love for EC that borders on poetry (sometimes quite literally), and it is a pleasure to read this zine. Not too long ago, there used to be EC fanzines by the dozen, but Don's seems the only one today in 1978. So, all you EC fanatics, get your rear in gear and get this fanzine and support Don. EC L is published monthly. Don has approached me to help him get support for EC Fandom, and I am more than willing to do just that (hear that, Don?) I am a big EC fan, and even though AFTA is dedicated to recent comics and media, it is primarily dedicated to me, and my likes and dislikes (he said without sounding egotistical). Would you out there like to help me out, with EC style stories (keep 'em short), EC articles, perhaps a news column written by Don (how 'bout it?) I am more than willing to do some stuff on EC, God knows today's comics pale by comparison with EC.

EPIC, Cliff Bird, 616 Livingston, Hurst, TX 76053 (52 pages, saddle stitched, offset, excellent quality paper and cover stock, perfect photo reproduction, $3.50 postpaid) // Dedicated to movie stars of old, this impressive package has got it all: informative, polished writing, in-depth articles, impeccable repro on the photos. #1 has got pieces on Jean Rogers, Sharton Tate, Buster Crabbe, Flash Gordon in Art. #2 will have a Jean Rogers interview, a cover by Clyde Caldwell of Flash Gordon, art by Al Williamson, Norman Rockwell, an article on Spartacus. Right now Cliff is working on SIMBA #2, which is dedicated to R.E.H. with special contribs from Tevis Clyde Smith, Harold Preece, L. Sprague de Camp, Karl Edward Wagner, and Howard. Write to Cliff for info in SIMBA.

APOLOGY TO MURRAY

I'm sorry, Murray, really!!

Some of you have written me, concerned that I am taking what seems to be unwarranted pot shots at Murray Bishoff, a columnist (dare I say it) for THE BUYER'S GUIDE, an adzine, which, too, does not fare well in these pages.

So I have taken this space to explain to you all that I hold Murray in a very special place in my heart. Were it not for Murray, we would be at a loss for touching obituaries like the Mort Weisinger one in which he ran a cartoon with Mort's head on a Superman body with the legend "WEISINGER DIES" headlining the obit. That was a true act of taste and decorum, Mur, something I'm sure possibly brought at least a tear to the friends and family Mort leaves behind to grieve for him.

Sure I have said that Murray is the president of THE SOCIETY FOR CREATIVE EMBOLISM. I have said that Murray lacks anything resembling raw intelligence. I said that he was once treated by a doctor for 'terminal asininity.' But those times are behind me now.

It is clear what is motivating me here. I know now. JEALOUSY. Plain and simple jealousy.

So no more Murray jokes. Promise.

Murray can't help what he is. And I respect him for it.

So let's bury the hatchet, Mur.

Call me up, and we can talk about where.

Respectfully,
Your fan, Bill Dale

EXCELSIOR, Lloyd Lawrence, PO Box 459, Claverack, NY 12513 (20 pages, 5½ x 8½, xerox, irregular, 30¢ @) Short articles, reviews on sf and fantasy topics, with a fanzine review column by Jim Saldana. The latest issue is #4 (Jan.-Feb. 1978)

FANDOM TRADER, Bobby Sommerkamp, 1803 Bayou Grande Blvd NE, St. Pete, FL 33703 (12 pages, 50¢, offset, monthly) FT #11 will be out in July, so order your copy now. FT is the best candidate for a modern day GEORGE, containing fan news and reviews, fan art, a letters column, contests-- all infused nicely with the delightful personality and humor of the editor, Bobby Sommerkamp. This fanzine, with the proper support, could really become a significant fixture in fandom. PLEASE, PLEASE get a copy now.

FAN's ZINE, Wally Stoelting, 852 Old Brook Road, Charlottesville, VA 22901 (16 pages, mimeo, front stapled) ends with issue #15 the more or less regular schedule Wally published it on. Due to apathy (Wally's) primarily, FZ will continue sporatically, possibly seeing a few more issues. It is a shame, FZ had nice book and zine reviews, plus a decent lettercol, perhaps if we write Wally we can infuse some life into FZ and get it going again...

FAN'S ZINE, Jay Van Bockel, 802 Day St., Fairmont, MN 56031 (43 pages, offset, 75¢, 4-$2.50), // A nice outrightly biased Marvel zine with art by Tim Corrigan, Al Hanley, Mike O'Neal, and articles and reviews of Marvel comics. This, being issue #6.

FANTAFOLIO, Peppy White, 7612 Hogarth St., Springfield, VA 22151 (32 pages, saddle stitched, offset, card stock and in plastic wrapper, quarterly, $1.00 per, (#1- 50¢)) // A superior showcase for artists and writers. Fiction, strips, art portfolios by fans. I like STAR TRECCH, the Star Trek satire, and the excellent art by Jerry Nowotny.

FANTASMA, Steve Streeter, 1104 W. Lincoln, Mt. Prospect, IL 60056 (12 pages, 5½ x 8½, offset, 40¢ @) // Although this fanzine suffers from embarrassing editorial wobble (Steve is one editor, Cliff Meth (21 Wenonah Av., Rockaway, NJ 07866) is the other,) it is saved by Gene Phillips excellent article THE THEME OF THE BAT. Chris Padavano's incoherent ramblings are unintentionally funny, and Cliff Meth calling fans "half witted assholes" and "a bunch of fags" gives the zine a certain inverted sort of charm.

FANTAZINE, Kevin E. Trabaris, 832 Bell Lane, Winnetka, IL 60093 (20 pages, front stapled, offset, 75¢ @// #3 has got two excellent strips: JADE by Mike O'Neal, and DAMN SAVAGES by Earl Geier (this Geier is simply fantastic), other fiction and art scattered about. Get it for Geier if you get it.

FANZINES CLASSIFIED, Lari Davidson, 8471 Bennett Road, Richmond, BC V6Y 1N6 (12 pages, stapled in upper left corner, mimeo, 25¢ @ // Issue 1 (there will be another one very soon) is a listing of all the fanzines that accept contributions, the type of contributions they prefer, and rate of pay. This is an invaluable guide to all fan artists and writers. Fan editors, I noticed there were a lot of you who weren't listed. Send info on your zine to Lari NOW! (title, name, address, frequency, type of contributions desired, rate of pay, if any) AFTA is in the first issue. I want to see all you fan editors send info on your zine to Lari, and all you fan artists and writers order a copy. Along with the listing, there is a valuable section HOW TO CONTRIBUTE TO A FANZINE. This is a needed fan project and all of us must support it, if just by ordering a copy from Lari. Who knows, you may find a couple of fanzines you never heard of there (I did).

FEEDBACK (Chester Cox, PO Box 356, Shaw AFB, SC 29152) (28 pages, stapled in upper left corner, irregular, 50¢ (?)) // FB goes all offset with issue #7, out soon if not already. I'm not sure of what Chester is charging, but you can write OR send him a little more than what it might be. #7 should have CONFUSED REVIEWS, Chester's review col, plus all the usual fannish articles and commentary. Plus-- an invigorating lettercol. In FB #6, Alan Light wrote an irate letter to Feedback, touched off by comments Chester made in a previous issue. Always controversial, always exciting...

FLORIDA FANDOM, Rick and Ruth Coy, 133½ Akron St., Lake Worth, FL 33460 (12 pages, 5½ x 8½, offset, 50¢ per) // Each issue lists clubs, stores, and zines originating from Florida, plus contests, reviews and articles on comics and sf.

Bernie McCarty, 1124 Abbot Lane, Park Forest South, IL 60466 publishes a newsletter FAWCETT COLLECTORS OF AMERICA for all Fawcett comics fans. If you are interested, he wants to send you a copy and/or correspond with you. Write to him for particulars.

FORESHADOWINGS, Glenn Lisle, 294 Front St., Apt. 302, Belleville, Ontario K8N 2Z8 (4 pages, offset, couldn't discern a price) // Glenn's FORESHADOWINGS is for Gene Day fans, telling of his latest doings and what not. Again, write to Glenn.

FUNNYWORLD (Mike Barrier, PO Box 1633, New York, NY 10001) (52 pages, offset, saddle stitching, color cover, $2.50, quarterly) // This is a zine for fans with an interest in the animated cartoon. #17 has articles on the Disney Studio during WW2, interviews with Dick Huemer, Roy Williams, plus reviews and news. Typeset and professional, many photos.

GALACTIC NEWSFRONT, Dan Watson, 1520 Hedge Road, Champaign, IL 61820 (4 pages, offset, monthly, 13¢ stamp) // GN is a newszine/reviewzine which focuses primarily on Dan's own publications such as: ECSTASY OBLIVION, ENTITY, VERSE, NO SEX, but #2 (April 1978) has an interview with Earl Geier (who did a tremendous story in ECSTASY OBLIVION #3) which is quite good, even considering the short space they had. Earl is one interesting guy. Send Dan your name and address and get on his mailing list.

THE GALACTIC REVIEW, Stanley Greene, 750 Sycamore St., Apt. #1, Red Bluff, CA 96080 (24 pages, mimeo, front stapled, 40¢) // TGR #4 (March 1978) has got fanzine reviews, an article on the Firesign Theater (yes!) plus many other columns and letters from various folk. General topics, centering loosely around sf and sf zines, chatty, friendly.

GODZILLAMANIA, Richard Campbell, 520 Weldon Street, Latrobe, PA 15650 (24 pages, 8½ x 5½, offset, $1.00) As you can deduce from the title, thisun's about GODZILLA and assorted Japanese advancements of the cinema.

ZINE CONVENE (continued)

THE HEROINES SHOWCASE (formerly THE HEROINE ADDICT), Steven R. Johnson, PO Box 1329, Campbell, CA 95008 (36 pages, typeset, glossy stock, card stock-cover, quarterly, $1.00, ALTHOUGH... to get this zine, what you do is join the COMIC HEROINES FAN CLUB and pay Steve $3.00, you get this zine, plus a stripzine/fictionzine called THE ADVENTURESS, with original fiction and art featuring heroines) // #12 has got an interview with Frank Thorne, articles on Wonder Woman, Black Orchid, Golden Age Girls, Jungle Heroines, reviews, letters, in short, the perfect fanzine for those with an interest in heroines (and aren't we all in that number?) Well-written, professional and slick in layout, but still features much fan art.

HOLA!, Carol ("Strick") Strickland, 5316 Blue Water Place, Fayetteville, NC 28301 (20 pages, offset, front stapled, quarterly, $1.00 @) // #2 discusses the Doom Patrol and the various Wonder Womans of different earths in addition to reviews and letters galore. Informative to the hilt, but lots of fun. A must for Wonder Woman fans. More informal than HEROINES SHOWCASE.

HOLY COW!, Troy Rose, Rt. 2, Box 28-B, Clintwood, VA 24228 (10 pages, side stapled, monthly) // #2's high points are an article on THE AVENGER by Glenn Postle, and a S & S strip by Troy Rose and Bob Mosher. Copies of #2 are 50¢, as is #1 (a special satire issue).

IT'S ONLY A MOVIE , Norm Devalliere, 551 Jean St. #308, Oakland, CA 94610 (anywhere from 4 pages to 20 pages, irregular, 5-$3.00, offset, stapled in upper left corner) // Very hip, very interesting rock music fanzine, the last issue I received was #4 (8/77) Any since then, Norm?

Cornell Kimball (PO Box 8168, Salt Lake City, UT 84108) reports that his zine JONNY IRIQUOIS ADVENTUREZINE will end with the July 1978 issue, #4, which'll have a complete index to the series, a list of all the characters who appeared, a scientific article on pterodactyls. JIA will be 25¢. Cornell lists the reasons for cancellation as his going away to college, using up the JONNY QUEST material, and that he's just been burned out doing fanzines. As a going away present for Cornell, how about writing to CBS (who is considering picking up JONNY QUEST) to encourage them to put the show back on the air. Write to the president of CBS, who is ROBBERT WUSSLER, CBS-tv, 51 West 52nd St., New York, NY 10019.

MIDNIGHT MARQUEE, Gary J. Svehla, 5906 Kavon Av., Baltimore, MD 21206 (44 pages, glossy stock, photos, irregularly, $1.75) // The former GORE CREATURES returns, the September 1977 issue (#26) with a round of well-researched and perceptive articles: RITUAL AND HEROISM IN THE FANTASY FILM, the filmmusic of THE NIGHT OF THE HUNTER, Allison Hayes (the 50 Foot Woman), an analysis of THE BLACK CAT, fanzine reviews and more. Intelligent, thought-provoking, recommended for fans of the horror film.

MINDROT, David Mruz, 3112 Holmes Av. South, Minneapolis, MN 55408 (36 pages, 5½ x 8½, offset, quarterly, $1.00, 4-$3.00) // Dave' excellent zine on Hollywood animation has just come out with another issue. #10 has got a salute to Walter Lantz, plus letters and columns by Jim Korkis and Jerry Beck, and Ron Hall (his spotlighting Oscar winnin cartoons) Recommended.

MODERN CORRESPONDENCE, Tom Hosier, 1044 Chapel St., Apt. 507, New Haven, CT 06510 (38 pages, small-3" x4", offset, photos, irregular, 65¢) // Strangely absorbing and creative zine combining cartoons, text, and more for perverse and fascinating results. Quite out of the ordinary.

MR. KISS KISS BANG BANG, Mike France, 168 Whitman Road SE, Winter Haven, FL 33880 (56 pages, card stock, color cover, fine repro and many, many photos, $1.75) If you like James Bond, or hell, even have a passing interest in Bond, this is the fanzine for you. Comprehensive, fannish, packed with photos and information, you must get it. Zat is an order.

MYSTERIOUS TIMES, William A. Karpowicz, Jr., 1013 Short NE, Grand Rapids, MI 49503 (46 pages, 8½ x 5½, offset, bi-monthly, $1.00, 6-$6.00) // Quite excellent zine devoted to detective fiction, issue #4 (March 1978) has got an interview with Otto Penzler and terrific chatter and book reviews. Bill is discouraged at the respon to MT, lacking contributors primarily. This is unfortunate, since MT could really be a fine forum for detective fans. What you can do is even if you have only a sligh interest in mysteries, drop Bill a buck and a letter stating your support. And you writers and artists, you know what to do--don't hide, I know most of you are mystery fans out there. Hell, I am and I may contribute. So let's save MT, already!

APOLOGY TO EVERYONE

I just want to take this space to apologize to everyone for everything I have ever done, or will do.

Many of you are disturbed that AFTA is committed to being a "controversial" fanzine. Most of you want to be pacified, not excited. I can understa that, really.

Many of you are disturbed that we print a naughty cartoon here and there, and that we occasionally use language that is commonly called "street language" or "not nice words." You wa a fanzine that everyone in your family can read. You want to give it to your dried up grandmother who doesn't have any teeth anymore, so she can read it in her bifocals while she's watching LAWRENCE WELK on Channel 9.

So what choice do I have but to ben to this kind of protest?

I apologize for the things I have s that might have ~~made people think~~ offended you. I'm really sorry. I me really. I'm really, really, really sorry. I'm so FUCKING sorry I feel lik putting my cock in a blender.

-Bill-Dale

IMBUS, Frank Lovece, 947 Maple Drive, #15, organtown, WV 26505 (40 pages, 5½ x 8½, ffset, $1.50) // Easily the best fanzine n current comics (with the possible exception f THE COMICS JOURNAL) I will review. The nly thing is Sam de la Rosa (co-editor) and Frank don't publish it often enough. #3 is from September 1977. The articles include nes on Fury, Howard, the theme of war in comics, an interview with Tony Isabella on WAR IS HELL. The art? Well, I'll list a few names, and if they don't impress you, you better get out of this hobby: a cover by Pat Boyette, drawings and spot illos by Steve Leialoha, Ric Cruz, Arvell Jones, Craig Russell, Mike Vosberg, Ernie Chan, Walt Simonson, Gene Colan, Frank McLaughlin, Wally Wood, John Buscema, Mike Grell, Alex Toth, John Romita, and Bill Everett. Frank has only sold ½ of the print run (500 out of 1000), so let's order up the rest and clean him out, so they can get another NIMBUS on the boards. // NIMBUS #2 is still available for $1 , it is 24 newspaper pages, and includes articles on Adam Strange, E-Man, an interview with Don McGregor, an interview with God, and art by Kupperberg, Pollard, Zeck, Staton, Byrne, Duffy Vohland, plus the usual gang. If I had four stars, NIMBUS would get five.

NOSTALGIA RADIO NEWS, Allen Rockford, 505 Seeley Road, Syracuse, NY 13224 (40 pages, stapled in upper left corner, mimeo, offset, with some photos, 50¢, monthly,) // For fans of old radio programs, with trivia quizzes, articles, and listings (for the New York area) of radio programs of interest to radio nostalgics. Good zine.

OMNIBUS, Fred Greenberg, 69 Morris Av., Morristown, NJ 07960 (40 pages, 5½ x 8½, offset, 60¢) // Very, very good general comics zine, the first issue has interviews with Juan Ortiz and Joe Staton. You may remember Fred as the person behind the Saturday and Sunday comic shows at the Paramus Mall in Jersey and in Philly, yep, the same. Great art, really has potential. A top-notch first issue. I hear that a second issue is out, but I didn't get it yet. Fred?

OSTARA, Flint Mitchell, 7331 Terri Robyn, St. Louis, MO 63129 (38 pages, mimeo, front stapled, irregular, $1.25 or trade) // Superlative fiction and an article on Star Wars, plus fanzine reviews and letters are featured in the second issue of OSTARA, available from Flint for $1.25. Recommended.

OUTER LIMITS NEWSLETTER, Steve Streeter, (ed. FANTASMA), 1104 West Lincoln, Mount Prospect, IL 60056 (32 pages, 5½ x 8½, offset, $1.25, or if you join the OL fan club (which costs $2.00 and 5 15¢ stamps), you get four issues of the newsletter)) // Although not quite as detailed and Ted Rypel's work (see below), still a good effort, which is lacking support. Issue #1 has got articles on OL gum cards, a Star Trek vs. OL comparison, letters, sf news, ads, lots of art, a column by Ted Rypel. A promising first issue.

THE OUTER LIMITS--An Illustrated Review, Ted C. Rypel, 11100 Governor Av., Cleveland, OH 44111 (64 pages, saddle stitched, offset, glossy card stock cover, irregular, there are 4 volumes, each is $3.00, if you just want the next volume (#3), it's $3.50) A beautifully done and intense analysis, episode by episode, of our favorite sf series. The photo repro is superb, the writing is brilliant, Volume Two indexes/reviews episodes #13-24, Volume One #1-12. At this point, just the two volumes are available. Watch AFTA for news of any more volumes (two more are planned to complete the index), and in the meanwhile, send $6.00 to Ted right now. The reference work for any OL fan.

PAN-GALACTIC CORNUCOPIA, Charles Smith, 3136 Hennepin Av., South, Apt. #4, Minneapolis, MN 55408 (22 pages, ditto, front stapled, no price listed) // A great little ditto personalzine. In the old days of fandom, these would be plentiful, now only this and Rich Fifield's SPIRIT OF FANDOM seem to be left. Charlie Smith is an interesting and clever fellow, and thankfully this issue is him, all him, drawings, reviews (of sf books, comics) and what not, and is quite charming all in all. Charlie never gave me a price, and I probably shouldn't even be reviewing it here, but it is a wonderful personalzine, and you would do well to get in touch with Charlie right away. #2 (March 1978) is the latest issue, and bv the looks of it, it is published monthly.

phiz, Bruce Townley, 2323 Sibley St., Alexandria, VA 22311 (10 pages, ditto, front stapled, no price listed) // Produced for APA-50 and people who think right, another chatty little personal zine, with letters, plus some nice color ditto work (a lost art, these days of offset) Have you noticed a trend in AFTA #2 for me to stay away from high circulation mags and slickies and go for the the kind of fanzines you can really get into? Damn right, you are.

PITTSBURGH FAN FORUM, Ben Pondexter, 827 Anaheim St., Pittsburgh, PA 15219 (44 pages, 5½ x 8½, offset, color paper for covers, 75¢, 6-$4.00, bi-monthly) // Disguised as the bulletin for the Pittsburgh Comix Club, this is a damn good fanzine. Laid out well, attractive, and always interesting. #36 (April-May, 1978) has an interview with Mike and Jerry from STREET ENTERPRISES (The Comic Reader, Menomonee Falls Gazette), a column by Howard Siegel, fanzine reviews, club news and announcements. I don't have to tell any fans in the Pittsburgh Area to contact Ben about the club, do I? Good, you're with it today. Recommended highly. And published on schedule, even.

SAVAGE REPORTS, PO Box 717, Adrian, MI 49221 (16 pages, 5½ x 8½, offset, 25¢) // Issue #1 is primarily a propoganda piece for THE SAVAGE CINEMA CORP., amateur filmmakers (well, not strictly amateur, but not yet hot property) whose claim to fame has been THE DEMON LOVER (Val Mayerik did the poster for it, and appeared in the film too) This issue has an interview with director Donald Jackson, and is interesting, even if you haven't seen the film (it played only in very few theatres, mostly in bigger cities) For a quarter... (Will there be future issues? Dunno...)

SF/F, Allen Barnella, 810 Garfield, Bay City, MI 48706 (40 pages, ditto, nice color ditto work, semi-annually, $1.00) // Good first issue, with reviews, articles and original poetry, with an emphasis on sf and fantasy in tv and movies: Star Trek, Space:1999, The Hulk, Wonder Woman, etc. Includes a fan club and con calendar listing which is valuable.

*THIS IS A SPECIALLY DESIGNED BOX GUARANTEED TO GET ROY THOMAS ANGRY ENOUGH TO WRITE ONE OF HIS FUNNY LITTLE LETTERS TO AFTA—

ROY THOMAS IS A...

hack
a twat
a jerk
a not so nice person
a dip
a spaz
a twit
a nurd
a four-eyes
a fairy
a Methodist
a comics writer
a tyrant
a piece of do-do
and a hippie

ZINE CONVENE (continued)

SCOTT'S SUPERSPECTACULAR, Scott Topping, R#3, Twin Lakes, Dowagiac, MI 49047 (8 pages, no price, offset, stapled in upper left corner, irregular) // Don't have a price on this, but you can write to Scott. Scott also publishes HERO SANDWICH, which seems to be in limbo at the moment. SCOTT'S SUPERSPECTACULAR (or SSS) is a nice little zine devoted to Star Wars, with Star Wars news, plus a bit of fanzine news and reviews, then and again. Future issues will cover more general subjects, I suspect, fan news, comics and all, write to Scott to get on his mailing list. The last ish I got was #4, which I received on Feb. 27.

SOUNDS FINE, Gary Groth, PO Box 292, Riverdale, MD 20840 (12 pages, tabloid newsprint, bi-monthly, deadline SF #25 is September 1, 1978, SF #26, November 1, 1978, etc. 10-$3.00) // The adzine for rock music fans and record collectors, with TBG-type ad rates and format. A few articles here and there, now and again. Now, while I'm on the non-comics adzines trip, mind as well mention

FILM COLLECTOR'S WORLD, Rick Best, PO Box 248, Rapids City, IL 61278 (48-80 pp., semi-monthly, mailed second class (as is Sounds Fine), 12-$3.00, 24-$5.00) // For film collectors of posters, stills, clips, pressbooks and actual prints (8mm and 16mm), concentrating on older films with nostalgic value.

SPIRIT OF FANDOM, Sgt. Richard K. Fifield, CO. B., 1st Raden, FMF, FPO San Francisco, CA 96602 (14 pages, ditto, single copy- 25¢, no subs, available for LOC or trade) // Articles and reviews on comics, fans, and whatever in the classic fannish way. Letters, too. The kind of zine I fall in love with very quickly. Send Rich a quarter now.

STRIP SCENE (George Morley, publisher, REMUDA PUBLISHERS, 6312 Crowchild Trail SW, Calgary, Alberta, T3E 5R5,) (50 pages, card cover stock, mimeo, $1.25, 4-$4.00, quarterly) // The latest news on STRIP SCENE follows-#4 will be out soon (if not out now), articles within include ones on Star Hawks, Comic characters in the movies, Caniff's Dickie Dare by Carl Hoark, Inside Neal Adams, Barney Baxter, letters, ads... As you can easily deduce, SS is about the comic strip form, and succeeds admirably.

STARBOOK, Henry Malanowski, 1200 NW 116 Terrace, Miami, FL 33168 (20 pages, 5½ x 7, twice a year, 40¢ each, no subs) // Primarily a fiction zine, offset, includes ads and a few pieces of art, newest issue is #3. Henry, under STARR PUBLICATIONS, publishes a number of other zines, HANDS IN THE DARK, and GALACTIC OUTPOST, among others, so send for one of his flyers and check out the rest of his zines. He is also in need of writers and artists.

T.V. CHARIOT, Robert Cain, PO Box 234, Mesa, AZ 85201 (17 pages, xerox, on one side of page only, front stapled, bi-monthly, $1.00, 6-$5.00) // Articles on Logan's Run and Man From Atlantis. TV CHARIOT prints articles and photographs from fantasy and sf tv shows. This issue is #5, #6 was due out in May.

ULTRAZINE, Matt Bucher, 2550 Windgate Road, Bethel Park, PA 15102 (12 pages, xerox, 5½ x 8½, saddle stitched, 20¢ and a stamp (the 15¢ ones, don't cheat now) // Fine little xeroxine, with articles on Batman and the Inhumans. The latest issue is #3. Matt wrote me recently and requested an interview. So I answered some questions (not quite as bizarre as the ones in my own interview thish) and the interview will be printed, part in ULTRAZINE, and part in John Harris' FAN WORLD. In fact, John has just started a SAVE AFTA campaign, and I being the modest person you know me to be, will list his address here so you can join forces with him: John Harris, 54 Berkshire Dr., Crystal Lake, IL 60014. EGOBOO WARNING!! EGOBOO WARNING!! uh, oh, that means I'm talking too much about myself, and I need a change of pace. So, let's talk about stapling.

When I say "front stapled", I mean a fanzine is stapled with two or three staples inserted front to back, along the left hand edge. I don't mean that someone put staples through the front at random.

Saddle stitched, means a staple right through the fold on the left hand side. AFTA is saddle stitched. But enough of this "shop talk", back to the reviews...

UNPUBLISHED, Brad Young, 1500 W. Harbour Drive,Apt. IH, Wheeling, IL 60090, (20 pages, 5½ x 8½, offset, saddle stitched, 40¢) // #2 (the Summer 1977 issue) has got a number of fine comic strips, plus movie reviews and fanzine reviews.

Thought I'd mention Rod Snyder's UNTELEOLOGY ILLUSTRATED again. That's it.

No, really, Rod (at 3600 Ripple Creek, Austin, TX 78746) has got a fine, fannish ditto-zine with record and book reviews here. The fact that Rod is an interesting and intelligent writer doesn't hurt.

ZINE CONVENE (continued)

THE VIDEOPHILE's NEWSLETTER, Jim Lowe, 2014 S. Magnolia Drive, Tallahassee, FL 32301 (40 pages, glossy stock-cover, saddle stitched, $1.50, bi-monthly, 6-$7.50) // A must for Betamax/video cassette owners. Informative, packed tight with facts and hints on recording, upkeep and availability of machines and videocassettes. The videocassette Bible.

WORLDS OF THE IMAGINATION, Dave Coleman, 437 McClellan St., West Point, MS 30773 (16 pages, 5½ x 8½, offset, irregular, 50¢ (?), 4-$1.75 (these from last ish))// WOTI showcases the most talented and funniest cartoonists working in fandom today--Eric Vincent, Bob Vojtko, George Erling, Greg Spagnola, and Doug Bryson--in short, terrific little comic strips. In addition to all of that, Scott Topping has a column, and Dave does some fanzine reviews. Highly recommended. Oh, yeah, the issue of which I speak is numbered 6. I'll have to start mentioning the issue right at the beginning, rather than...

ZIMMERMAN BLUES #7, Brian Stibal, 4932 Theiss Road, St. Louis, MO 63128 (20 pages, offset, photos, saddle stitched, irregular, $1.00 per copy. 4-$4.00) // There is no way I can rave enough about this issue, although I suspect being a Dylan fan helps incredibly. This is the Dylan fanzine, by people who know what the score is. #7 (Fall 1977) has got news, an article on the various eccentricities of collecting Dylan discs, an interview with Tom Paxton on Dylan (now if they would just interview Tom Paxton on Tom Paxton), an analysis of "Romance in Durango", A piece about the three different versions of BABY LET ME FOLLOW YOU DOWN, art, photos, much more. Each issue features dynamite reviews and in-depth analysis by people who really care about Dylan enough to do him justice. As far as I know, #8 isn't out yet. Recommended without any reservation whatsoever.

An unpreviewed zine is BATIZINE from Chris Moore, 1024 McDonald, Toledo, OH 43612 , 80¢ @ postpaid, sub 5-$4.00, each issue has a full color cover printed on thin cardboard, art, stories, articles, and each issue, an interview with a Batman personality. #1 has an interview with Denny O'Neil, #2 with Al Milgrom and also "The Aquarious Conflict!"

Out as you read this is Ward O. Batty's FANDOM DIGEST #1 (from 944 Austin Avenue NE, Atlanta, GA 30307), #1 will have a number of comic strips, written by Ward, and drawn one, by Rafael Kayanan and the other by Mitch O'Connell (see this section's backcover). Ward is also sponsoring a Fanzine Awards Project, and is now accepting nominations for best new zine, best established zine, best major zine, best sf zine, best semi-pro artist, fan artist, writer (comic script), writer (short story), cartoonist, editor. The only thing he's missed would be fan writer (non-fiction). #1's also got a strip, The Beavers by Dave Sim, a report on Deep South S-F Con, short stories, poetry, reviews, etc. Some others involved are Roy Reimer, Steve Pick, Earl Geier, Jerry Collins, Mark Armstrong. Ward is planning to apply for membership in the UFO, too.

Change of address for Jerry and Jean Bails, from 487 Lakewood, Detroit, to 21101 E. 11 Mile Road, St. Clair Shores, MI zip- 48081, this to be in affect August 1, 1978.

Andy Jaysnovitch, 6 Dana Estates Dr., Parlin, NJ 08859 plans on pubbing a zine on older tv fan favorites, with articles, indexes, etc. Write to him if you think you can help him out.

Sgt. Roy A. Fabian, Jr., 4847A Lee Village, Ft. Campbell, KY 42223, is doing a chatty fan communication zine, TALKATHON, where you can express your opinions and communicate with other fans. Write him a letter for inclusion, or order #1. It's 35¢.

Jim Denney, PO Box 9124, Fresno, CA 93790 says ART & STORY #3 will be out soon. It'll include a BLACK STAR adaptation (from the Ray Bradbury story) by Jim, drawn by Tom SUtton.

Gary Heilman (ed. THE CRYPT OF HORRORS) is shooting a supernatural/fantasy film in 35mm color THE WITCHING NIGHT, and will probably publish the second issue of CRYPT after filming ends. What about post-production? Oh, well...

Again, a mention for Clay Geerdes' COMIX WORLD, a newszine for underground comix fans, from PO Box 7081, Berkeley, CA 94707, 24-$5.00. Get it.

Now some news from Sam de la Rosa: Jim Main's PPFSZT! is cancelled (Jim at 85A Prospect Hill Road, New Milford, CT 06776), but he may come out with a Gerry Anderson zine. // Pete Iro (455 Potomac Av., Buffalo, NY 14213) will publish WOWEE-KAZOWIE! #3 and a strip zine this year. // Willie Blyberg is also planning a stripzine when he gets the dough (68 Alcott St., Acton, MA 01720) // George Breo, 5600 Milwaukee Av., Chicago, IL 60646 may come out with Chronicle #6 this year // And Doug Hazelwood might have a strip he's inked published in STAR-REACH.

And now, for an ad from Paul A. Flores...

MARVEL NOTE CARDS - At an auction a few years ago, I picked up a couple of hundred of these wild Marvel note cards. They are glossy, 9½" x 6", brightly colored reproductions of single panels of art from pre-1971 Marvel comics. Most are either by Jack Kirby or Gene Colan. They have plenty of room inside for your personal messages, and are a perfect way of greeting a new fan into fandom, keeping in touch with your friends, or just saying hello to a pitiful overworked fanzine editor (Hi, Bill). I am selling them at 50¢ each, or 10 for $4.50. I will pay the postage (*) means that I only have a few available, so please list an alternative, just in case. Send your check or money order to Paul A. Flores, WSA #1218, 3551 Victory Dr., #308-F, Columbus, GA 31903...

*No. 1 Dr. Strange (in another dimension)
No. 2 Dr. Strange (seeking Eternity)
No. 3 Dr. Strange (finding Eternity)
No. 4 Thor
No. 5 Thor (kissing woman) !
No. 6 Karnilla making spell (from Thor)
No. 7 Spiderman
No. 8 Spiderman & Submariner
No. 9 Capt. Marvel
No. 10 Daredevil
No. 11 Galactus (wounded)
*No. 12 Sentry (from Fantastic Four)
No. 13 ????

I'd like to start a pen pal section. Sounds corny. How about a "correspondence exchange" Better? Send me your name, address, age, schooling (if ya want), and interests...

AFTA SHOCKS

LOCs (LETTERS OF COMMENT)

A
GEORGE PEREZ
S.DELAROSA

About letters, I generally print the longer criticisms I receive about the previous issue (in this case, #1). I also print anything witty or obscene regardless of whether it has anything to do with the issue. This is merely because letter columns can be insufferably dull if they go on for more than 5 pages. But soft, I don't generally don't print short, single-adjective criticism (AFTA was very good, AFTA was bull-do-do, etc.) unless they are well-taken, unusual or I am trying to get on the person's good side (I am, of course, not above bribes). I always print letters expressing a valid complaint, gripe, compassionate plea (for a worthy cause or project), or interesting idea. We didn't have any ideas (interesting or no) this issue, so instead, A BIT OF FUN!

(.)(.) BooBs!!

(SORRY)

I want this column to be your space (although you are also welcome to send me an article for publication elsewhere). I want this to be a place to resolve conflicts, argue, and exchange ideas (about AFTA and what you'd like it to become, and just ideas and feelings in general-- how you feel and think growing up (or in my case, getting old) in the 70's (soon the 80's, Jesus), and what you think of your Culture, what it says to you.

I pledge that this space will never be objective, and never be off limits for something everyone else feels is "too controversial" to print. Nothing is too anything to be censored, really. I want to stretch the limits of what a fanzine is by opening this up to be a forum for social comment, sarcasm, and (if we do it right) philosophy-- many people said there were a lot of things that were out of place in AFTA #1-- things that a fanzine shouldn't get into-- religion, sex, social commentary. I don't liste to those people. The people that worry me most in society are not people with opinions that they wa to express (provided they don't express it with a loaded gun), bu the people with no opinions at all. They are the people that will fou up the future.

I do want to apologize for the editing that was done to almost al of the letters... this was editin for space, not for content, and i any of you feel I am pulling phra out of context, tell me. I got o 60 letters commenting on AFTA #1, and to print them all would be insanity. Besides, many criticis surface again and again. I will save some space for the end, and into the gripes and articles one one and make some general replies.

First, more obligatory (but somewhat boring)stuff.

I want to thank the following editors who gave me plugs and/or reviews in their fanzines. The effect this has had is immeasurab (that's because it had no effect at all, just joking, folks!)

A kind acknowledgment goes ou to: Bob Andelman (FCJ NEWSLETTER), Linda Bushyager (KARASS), Matt Bucher (ULTI ZINE), Craig Berlin (COMIC FAN MEDIA), Che Cox (FEEDBACK) and Cherie Cox (TERIFFIC), David Coleman (WORLDS OF THE IMAGINATION), Lari Davidson (FANZINES CLASSIFIED), Dave Blanchard and Ruben-George Toyos (PHOENIX, the Mark Ernst apa), Dale Hammell (COPPER TOADSTOOL), Fred G. Hembeck (DATELINE: col in TBG), John D. Hemmings (WE), John Harri (COMIC BOOK COLLECTOR), Kim "Howard" Johns (THE COMPLATE MONTY PYTHON), Gordon Linzne (SPACE AND TIME), Glenn Lisle (FORESHADOWI Alan L. Light (for the free ad in TBG #238), Dave McDonnell (MEDIA REPORT column in TBG) L. Bruce Sapp (FUTUREVIEW column in TBG), Tony Scialis (COMPASS), Bill Sherman (K-A zine), Jerry Sinkovec and Mike Tiefenbache (THE COMIC READER), Bobby Sommerkamp (FANZI CONNECTION, now the new FANDOM TRADER), St Streeter (FANTASMA), Scott Topping (SCOTT' SUPERSPECTACULAR), Jay Van Bockel (FAN'S Z Jim Van Hise (RBCC--Critiques), Lee Woch (ALTERNATE CIRCUITS), also a big thanks to Ashley Scott Tillman and Harry Hopkins of the WSA, and to Jack Seabrook and Gary Gro for the wonderful letter in THE COMICS JOURNAL #40 (Jack for writing it, Gary for printing it). Even if AFTA doesn't make it, I am indebted to the effort everyone made to review it or mention it.

Continuing the THANK YOUs, I'd like to thank the following bookstores and dealers who ordered (and in some cases, received)

pies of AFTA #1 or #2. Please patronize em. Marilyn Bethke (who almost ordered, e sent me a VOID check), Larry Charet ARRY'S BOOK STORE), Rick and Ruth Coy, e Gulick (THE STAR BOOKSTORE), Ken Gale, ndy Junemann, Ronald J. Killion (THE RNING PAGE), Frank W. Mangiaracina, Lari vidson, Richard Noland, Barry Alan Richmond VIVA LA DIFFERENCE), Bob Sidebottom, Rowdy carlett, Sue Thieme (THE FANTASY MAIL CO.), ob Theissen (CONNER'S COMIX), Tim Teller,

I'd like to thank Howard Johnson who sent opies of AFTA #1 to John Cleese, Michael alin, Graham Chapman, Terry Jones, Terry illiam, Neil Innes, Eric Idle, and Carol leveland.

I'd also like to thank Jay Zilber and he members of UFO (United Fanzine Organization) urt Erichsen, Mark Gruenwald, Tom Mason, Rich orrissey, and Bill Sherman for voting AFTA n, and offering constructive suggestions on mprovement.

AFTA is also a member of the National Fantasy an Federation (N3F). Thanks to Irvin Koch.

I don't generally make a point of begging, ut I am badly in need of money (I am spending 1300 on AFTA #2, and I've got to get some of hat back if I want to publish #3), and any ut and out gifts at the point would be much appreciated. I would like to thank Ed Via, rian Green, Steve Komeshok, Dermot Kavanagh, ancy Lewis, and Ralph S. Harding, and others who asked not to be named for contributing ash to support AFTA. Every $.25 or $.50 at his point DOES make a difference.

But since I'm not one for begging, I'm not oing to make an impassioned plea for money, like Public TV stations do. Instead let's just et on the with letters already--

---

AFTA #1 was fantastic. The first DaDa fanzine that I've seen. Really Bill telling me to take care of myself from a man who has killed half of his name is pure DaDa. I love reviews and AFTA was full of them ("What is that supposed to mean?"). I also like to see opposing reviews, which you also had. The interview with George Perez was good and I'm looking forward to the second part. Hope AFTA is successful enough to ward off your financial crises and continue for many more issues. How does one "ward"? I know Robin is one but how do you do one?

--Jamie Alder, ed. TRICK FUNNEL, 9970 Liberty Road, Chelsea, MI 48118

I have a question for you. I know that Jack Kirby is somewhat important as comics go, because of the thousand of times that his name came up in AFTA. But do you think you could give me an idea of exactly what he does, because I heard recently that he lives in Thousand Oaks, which is right next door to us in Westlake. If he is of paramount (or even minor) importance we might (let me repeat: Might) be able to get an interview with him.

--John Shiban, 2448 Leaflock Av., Westlake Village, CA 91361, John is co-editor of QUANTUM (the other ed being Eddie Anderson)

("Jack Kirby? I've heard the name somewhere. Readers? // Seriously, I think that running a REAL Jack Kirby interview after the obligatory Jack Kirby interview last issue would put a strain on my conscience I could not bear. But it would be strange: A great man (me, I think) once said that all good reality degenerates into parody, and all good parody degenerates into real life. A case of the latter, if I agreed. No, don't bother...who needs a Jack Kirby interview anyway?" --Bill-Dale)

The two biggest mistakes in AFTA #1 were these: 1) You used too much humor. You seemed to be saying right at the start, "Well, folk, welcome to nonsense", and that's bad. Humor is need, natch. But no so much. Act like you care a little, huh? Here's what I mean. One article will be an entire joke, like how you're dead and all. The next will be a joke article, too. Then an article which contains humor by the truck-loads. Then you'll run the X-Men Index. Hell, by then, I was used to your humor. So I read the index looking for gags. I kept saying, "What's the joke" and "I must have missed the satire." (You did. --Bill-Dale) When this happens, it ruins AFTA. You can't run so many humorous articles and then run a serious article and expect people to relate to it. Probably half of the people who read your fanzine reviews thought they were all jokes or something. The point is, it's hard when you joke to take ANYTHING you say as serious. That's bad. The 'dead' jokes were...unusual. I wouldn't dwell on it too much, though. Running gags are dull. Besides, I find no humor in lines like 'dead babies'. Some people would, I guess--but then some people watch SPACE ACEDEMY, too. I dunno. Maybe it's because I just lost a close relative which has turned me hostile towards your death gags. I guess they just hit me at a bad time. Try to keep them down, okay?

Now your second mistake, which is a GIGANTIC one, in my opinion: pages 83, and 89. The one thing I have learned in my many years as a fan publisher is this: In your zine, NEVER, but NEVER mention minorities, religion, or criticize real-life people. You are bound to offend some one. And, 'friend', you offended me! The Anita Bryant cartoon was GARBAGE. First, Idon't really give a darn about her; I am no fan of hers and I am against her prejudices. But criticising the whole, entire Christianity religion just because of one red-headed halfwit is WRONG. VERY WRONG. GETTING A BOMB THROUGH YOUR WINDOW WRONG. I don't like the comic book called STEELE (sic). But just because I hate it doesn't mean I'm STUPID enough to slur the whole entire comics field. This goes for Bryant, too. As you can guess by now, I am a Christian, and proud of my beliefs. I am not a fanatic; I simply believe in God, Christ, the Bible; I don't harm anyone, physically or on paper, unless it's a last resort; I follow the law; don't curse; don't believe in any false-gods, etc. That's basically as religious as I am. So when I see an INSULT against my relgion I get sore. Wouldn't you? I understood absolutely NONEof page 89. "Kill A Fag For Christ"--senselessness. Was it a gag? If so, unfunny. Also, you shouldn't slander homosexuals ("...grow up to be homosexuals...") if you do, your (sic) in big trouble, legally, or so I'm told. Also, its not funny. Fags are a minority, just like whites, blacks, etc. But back to page 89. I say again, I don't care about A.B., but you shouldn't insult some one--ANY ONE--unless you know all the facts. The bit about Christ being, well, its so ABSURD I can't even write it, but it was IGNORANT and shows the working of a two-year-old mind. Again I say--I really didn't understand page 89. Was it funny? Serious? Satire? Do you really kill fags? Do you honestly believe the things you wrote here? If so, your (sic) sick. Not everything about my religion is right. The comic you reprinted was TOTALLY ABSURD. The panel of the jerk looking at a broad and saying "Mmmmm, nice!" was hilarious. I remember seeing comics like that and laughing. They represented(to me, at least) the old idea of Christianity. My idea of it is simple--don't hurt nobody, don't insult ANY religion, whether it's mine or some cult thing, and live and let live. I don't care if someone is black, white, gay, etc.

Ireally would like you to explain what the devil page 89 meant. I must say, I'm baffled as to why you would criticize fags and Christianity. Very wrong, remember--no more prejudices, and take my advice--leavy touchy subjects ALONE! AFTA should be devoted to comics, films, TV; a page about religion is out of place. You wanna publish your religious-prejudices beliefs? Then publish a Bible of your own, don't put that stuff in AFTA.

Have to say that AFTA #1 was too heavy for me. The entire I LOVE AMERICA thing was way, way, way, too heavy! I guess it's easy to insult our country rather than help to change it, I dunno. There are things wrong in our world, and I can see how you can get depressed and worried about these things. But rather than insulting the USA, try changing things yourself. Go live in Russia, where you will REALLY find oppression! Thing are wrong all over the place, but I can't do a bloody thing about them myself, so I am not about to insult others because of it. No, I am not like you. I don't don't consta ly dwell on starving kids in India; I would rather watch CHARLEYS ANGELS. I like that show. I like skin. I like watching naked women. Is this so bad? I'm at a point in my life where all I'm really interested in is myself and the people I know. I'm 19, unemployed, and scarred ("Scared?") as hell about where my next meal is coming from. SO I am more interested in getting a job & surviving then political stuff. If this sounds selfish, it is; but a job means a future and such, so I'm very much concerned about it!

I leave you with one last suggestion: Have AFTA review some porno films. Porno films are highly underrated. Stuff like ODYSEX is really good and some bloody zine should cover it. I can't even find stuff like posters & lobbies for porno films! People are very prejudiced against X films and I'm tired of it. Just like every genre, some pornos are good, some are junk. So consider giving the X's some coverage. And if you know of any ODYSEX stuff for sale, (legally, atch), let me know. Best of Luck and Peace,

--Richard Campbell, 520 Weldon St.,
Latrobe, PA 15650, Richard is editor
of GODZILLAMANIA.

("Please, please, someone stop me, before I latch into this guy! A pro-porno, Bible toting, humorless dip. Let ME AT HIM..."

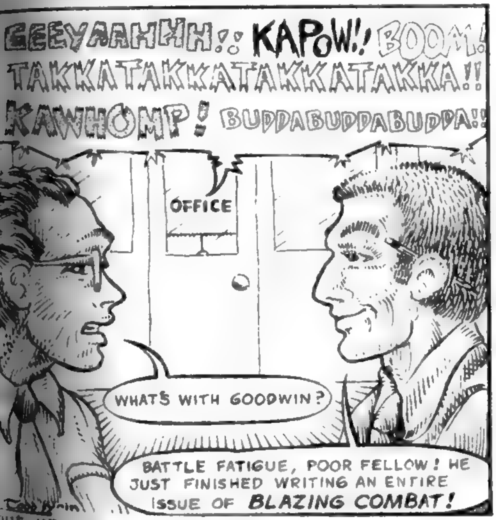
('I can't stop him, he's out of control')

("Let's take this point by point, like rational adults.

F HEMBECK/78

SHOCKS (LETTERS) (continued)

I'm sorry you lost a close one
the old Grim Reaper. Relatives
king right and left can get as
as running gags. Or running sores.
/I dont think I was slurring the
RE comics field by reviewing STEEL.
t STEEL. If they took offense, all
better. They are making money off it.
/You should believe in some false gods,
e the God of Moolah, the God of Porno,
s, I forgot you already do.
//About Christ being gay, I'll search
n the title of the book published about
year ago by a Roman Catholic priest (the
ican instantly condemned it, this, I
spect, is because it wasn't illustrated)
sus always said to love your fellow man,
who knows?
//If Christ would have admitted he was
, would that be coming out of the tent?
//Do I really kill fags? No, I just
im them slightly.
//Yes, I know what happens if you
ander homosexuals. They send out
ving bands of fairies to your home (the
me squad that seduces children in school
course) and they scratch your little
es out!! Cheeky, cheeky devils.
at can I say. You didn't understand page
. If you don't understand something, I
ways say, the very least you can do is
ut up.


GEEYAAHHHH!! KAPOW!! BOOM!
TAKKATAKKATAKKATAKKA!!
KAWHOMP! BUDDABUDDABUDDA!!
OFFICE
WHAT'S WITH GOODWIN?
BATTLE FATIGUE, POOR FELLOW! HE JUST FINISHED WRITING AN ENTIRE ISSUE OF BLAZING COMBAT!

A definition from WEBSTER'S you should
now: *satire*: trenchant wit, irony, or
rcasm used to expose or discredit vice or
lly.

Sometimes, in satire, the author assumes
persona, a character which is not really
n, to expose the folly directly. The rather
range narrators of Page 89 and WHY I LOVE
ERICA are two of these (in contrast, YES,
STILL READ COMICS is more "me")

I am a Christian. I just think that Anita
nd people who use the Bible to make up wild
ories (like homosexuality being wrong) are
be exposed for what they are: petty tyrants
nd misguided fools.

"Kill a fag for Christ" -- that is what I
ink is the paradox in Christianity condemning
mosexuality. Christ said, to love. If I
oose to love another man, where then is the
in? I don't think anyone should use the
ible to cause pain and discrimination.

So Anita wants to protect our children.
one can guarantee protection from the
ick people in a society which calls itself
true democracy. Some homosexuals, like
me heterosexuals, are lewd, promiscuous,
nd possibly deranged. But let us all be
nsible enough to at least admit a similar
mber of rapists, child molesters, and
rverts in the so-called "straight" pop.

About Anita Bryant being "outdated", yes, as a saleable news item, she is. But her philosophy goes on, and lives on in the minds of many. Next issue I may go into some of the legislation on homosexuals currently being passed today. About porn posters and lobby cards, I'm just gonna assume you were doing a number on me, for my own peace of mind." --Bill-Dale)

Overall, your lackseriousness is fun, although I'm sure it will turn many of the sensitifans off. There are just as many fans who feel that there are things which may not be laughed at as there are us normals. The if cover info page was like a delightful parody of one'a Ron's old *WEs* (And I must express what it did for me to see not only your IFICC logo, your PA logo, and your WSA logo, but your *entire WSA card reproduced*! Whether you meant to or not, you gave away much of your character right there--and the feeling is mutual. WSA can be the (along with IFICC--and I look forward to the merging possibilities of the two-- return to the fundom that I *just* missed experiencing.

I had never read any of Barrington's stuff 'cept for a boring piece or two in Ron's *WE*. Then I acquired a complete of TBG #33--now, and *TNJ* 3-15. Steve's dull; and here I had accepted his word when he told me he was a good writer. That'll teach him. Glad he didn't accept my offer to print "Stoplight" in *Feedback*. I will continue to say bad things about Steve until he pays me the $35 he owes me, then I may say nice things. Bitchy, ain't I?

Fan Primer was very personal, very revealing and touching, almost profound, but you escaped that. Intended to start feuds? Still wish that *AFTA* had come out mimeo, or better yet, ditto. My dream is that offset and mimeo will become so costly that everyone by RBCC, CJ, and WE--and, o'course, DC's stuff and *Fandom Funnies*--has to go ditto, and Alan goes bankrupt. *AFTA* does seem like it would be more comfortable in ditto.

Yellerjacket--funny. Stops just when it gets interesting, tho. Very hair-raising.

Senselessly,
--Chester Cox, PO Box 356, Shaw AFB, SC 29152

Chet is ed. of FEEDBACK and the head of IFICC

AFTA was a very fine piece of fan publishing. Really engrossing. Most fanzine articles aren't worth the time it takes to read 'em, but your stuff was full of good material. *Except* for those ravings from Mark Burbey. That has gotta be some of the biggest tripe I've read since C.C. Beck threw his little temper tantrums back in the now-defunct INSIDE COMICS. As I read it, I kept hoping that it was some kind of put-on, like this death-thing, but by the end of it I had to sadly conclude that this clown is serious. Too bad he's so intelligent and knows so many famous names that no one else can relate to him. Must really be lonely up there at the intellectual heights. Bull-shit.

Yeah, ROCKY HORROR is tremendous! Loved Riff-Raff. And I believe that was Tim Curry as the preacher at the start of the movie, right?

Loved that strip on page 59!! Hilarious! I've always wondered about the sex lives of some of the superheroes. Like, just consider Mr. Fantastic and the Invisible Girl. Some really kinky possibilities there!

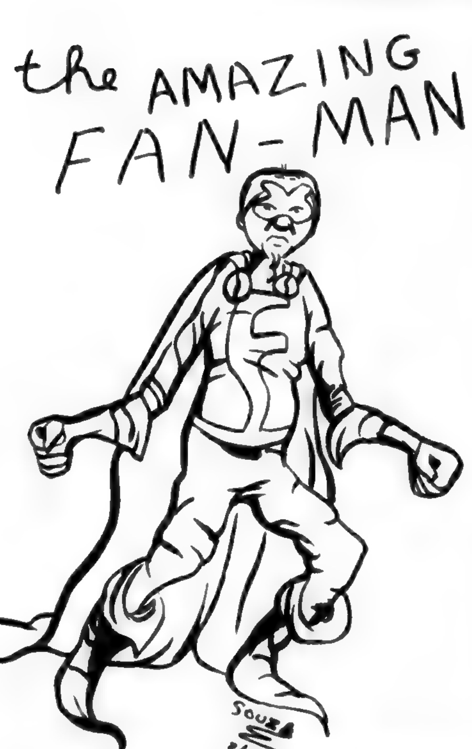
Peace, bro,
--Brad Foster, ed. TALES OF THE GIGACS, JABBERWOCKY, 1020 E. 45th #257, Austin, TX 78751

It is good to see SF fandom and Comics fandom opening up to each other, as represented both in AFTA (with your explanation of SF terminology and Jim Trever's look at SF products and nostalgia), and Richard Fifield's zine: THE SPIRIT OF FANDOM which have been my only real contacts with Comicdom since I left it and entered SFdom in 1974. Fandom, though is fandom, whether it is SF or Comic. People are people and fans are people (well, at least the last time I noticed. OF course there are exceptions like Alan Light, Howard Rogofsky, "Simpleton" Bell, Brad Parks, and my mother's brother but he=s dead--please say hi to him--oh, I forgot, sorry!) The only regret I have about the treatment of Science Fiction in AFTA is its shallowness. Though I understand your zine is concentrating on the media as one of its topics, there are other facets to SF than just the media and the collectables (such as gum cards) which envoke nostalgia. If Jim is going to concentrate only on SF's nostalgic purposes, wouldn't it be a good idea to get someone else to talk about its other faces: literature, SF in comics (that would be interesting), creation, topics, and even fandom itself?

Science fiction seem to be pictured by many comic fans as "The World of Star Trek" (or younger comic fans anyway), but it must be remembered that Star Trek came from SF and not the other way around. Though some Trekkers (adult, constructive ST fen) are fine people, Ihate to have SF represented to the eyes of other people as ST fandom, because of the majority of immature Trekkies (mostly kids who are uninterested in fando, but are having fun) that STAR TREK Fandom represents. It is like having Comics fandom looked at as only being a bunch of kids below the age of ten, and anyone whois part of comics after that age as a person with poor reading abilities.

("I think the prejudice towards comics fen by SF fen is greater than the reverse, but I don't know. About running sf book reviews and what not, I have shied away from that because I just don't have the space to do it justice. I am an sf-fan, too, and I know I'd have to devote at least 100 pages an ish to do it up properly (the fan scene and all) AFTA will presently have to restrict itself to comics, films, tv, records, and books of a fantasy or horror nature (although next ish I'll be doing some mainstream articles on Tom Robbins, Tom Pynchon, and Vonnegut). But what do you readers think? A short, sf book review column done by a real ace in the field who can pick out the really exceptionally good books to recommend?" --Bill-Dale)

Your review of FAMOUS MONSTERS was pretty accurate. It used to be such a nice, and readable magazine,too, back when it started in 1958 until the mid 60's. Since then it has been butchered so that it would be accessible to a reader at the sixth grade level, or maybe even below. It is really a shame that Forry must bring himself down so low. Although I don't know what the man is like personally, I had only met and exchanged little more than a sentence with him at the SF FAIR in San Francisco, he was once quite the BNF in SF fandom and has even been labelled (whether deservedly or not) "Mr. Science Fiction" (rather corny) a time or two because of his fannish contributions. Too bad he is so uncreative these days.



CAN THE FAN-MAN SURVIVE THE MENACE OF "THE COMMERCIALISM CRISES!!"

Your question: "Why hasn't comic fandom adopted its own terminology?" also interests me. It seems by now there would be a few words of fannish origin bopping around comicdom, but there isn't. I myself cannot explain why SF fandom has its own terms unless it has some relation to feeling alienated from the mundane world (not always for the worst) and deciding to go all the way with this alienation in the adoption of an alien tongue. Just a thought, which could be wrong and probably is. Well, Bill, its time for you to start a trend by creating your own fannish jargon for comic fandom. Good luck buckeroo...

("Maybe we can take that up next ish with the survey question about whether fans are "special?" Hmmmm... --Bill-Dale)

I liked your comment of Rutger's kinky sex trend, and the comment the Dean made. Does that reflect the mentality of 1) the college staff? (2) the students? (3) kinky sex? (4) Bill-Dale Marcinko, (5) AFTA or (6) all or most of the aforementioned?

In closing, I can only say that for a first issue (WOW!!), you have definitely ascended from the ashes (the Phoenix couldn't have done a better job), I wish I could have done as well with TGR #4. Thanks for sharing AFTA with me,

--Stanley Greene, 750 Sycamore St. #1, Red Bluff, CA 96080, ed. THE GALACTIC REVIEW.

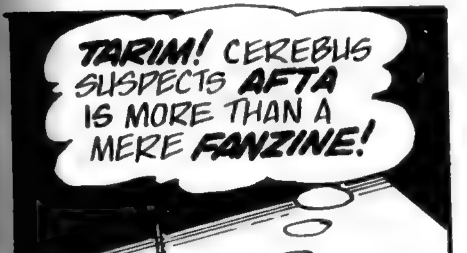
("About kinky sex, (2) and (4), although if I say (4), only more rumors will start. So I'll be safe and say (7). Oooops, there is no (7)." --Bill-Dale)

I am sixteen years old now and I dont know what to do and would appreciate it if you could tell me what to do. When I was a little girl it was not so bad because I got used to the kids on the block makeing fun of me, but now I would like to have boy friendslike the other girls and go out on Saturday nites, but no boy will take me because I was born without a nose--although I am a good dancer and have a nice shape and my father buys me pretty clothes.

sit and look at myself all day and cry.
ave a big hole in the middle of my face
at scares people even myself so I can't
ame the boys for not wanting to ake me out.
mother loves me, but she crys terrible
en she looks at me.
What did I do to deserve such a terrible
d fate? Even if I did do some bad things
didn't do any before I was a year old and
was born this way. I asked Papa and he
ys he doesn't know, but that maybe I did
mething in the other world before I was
rn of that maybe I was being punished for
s sins. I dont believe that because he
a very nice man. Ought I committ suicide?

Sincerely yours,
Desperate

My copy came without even having the
tside edge trimmed. This is such a basic
emental service I'm really shocked that it
sn't performed. Your halftones on the
d Sonja article were rather grainy. You
ould insist that photos be shot on full
3 point halftones. The point spread on
ese photos would be suitable for newspapers,
wspaper cut linotype plates maybe, but
rtainly are not what you need for a photo
fset white paper fanzine. Same criticism
plies to the Rocky Horror photo pages.
course, looking further over I see you
ly paid two hundred bucks to get the two
ndred copies of the thing printed off,
ich is not a bad rate at all, everything
nsidered, so perhaps I bitch too much.


TARIM! CEREBUS SUSPECTS AFTA IS MORE THAN A MERE FANZINE!
SIM 78

FOR BILL— Thanx for your interest
Dave Sim

("I collate, fold, staple, package, and mail each copy of AFTA myself. Trimming the edges would be my responsibility. A combination of lack of funds, lack of time, and general laziness prevented that. I will make an effort to have this issue trimmed (except for the very early copies I send out). My printer doesn't have metal plates, and can't go any higher than 65 point on the screening of photos. I'll either have to get larger photos with less detail or have him switch to metal plates and up goes the $$. What do you suggest?" --Bill-Dale)

You have some good stuff here, and some things I thought could just as well have been left out. My major comments in this area deal with reviews of current comics. I'm sure yours were as well done as anybody else's I've ever seen, but my main thought, who the hell cares? BY the time you get the reviews written, typed up, printed, the issue back from the printers, get the copies into the mail, the mail gets the copies to the readers, by the time all this takes place the reviews are hopelessly out of date. So who wants to read reviews of comics already off the stands? The space could be better devoted to other things. TCR does the service of hyping and reviewing upcoming material, and I'm not so sure that even if there were some way the reviews could be made to arrive in the reader's hands the same time the comics are on the stands that they would serve any purpose. Who is really going to not buy an issue because you disliked it? Or for that matter, how many will rush out and get that latest comic they don't have the money to pick up because you said the latest issue was better than normal?

("I have always been of the mind that the comic reviews in AFTA serve the purpose of interesting reading and discussion among fans, rather than as a consumer service, something like TCR provides. But what do you readers think?" --Bill-Dale)

The Perez interview was of interest and well done. I'm not at all sure I understand why you had to split this interview into two parts. Won't this ruin the line of thought continuity with the whole article? Some of the questions were well thought out. The answers were not especially illuminating, but then what can one expect from a Marvel comics artist anyway?

The other part of the fanzine I thought could be left out were the movie and Tv reviews. Another case of the who cares. With eight million magazines and newspapers in the mundane world reviewing movies on a daily basis, the purpose to be served by a fanzine performing that service yet one time sort of escapes me. Such articles might be interesting as a sort of compare-your-opinion-with-the-editor's-opinion, but beyond that I think they're worthless.

Red Sonja was of interest but I didn't think the writer, you in this case, really got into this subject very deeply. I sense immediately that you are on the side of the various Red Sonja' imitators and the traveling road show, but the criticism and the carping that has been leveled at this sort of exhibitionism is not idle and it is well vested. Nobody did a very good job refuting the criticisms. The character and the show is a sexist thrill, and I think rather than avoid the problem and chip away at the edges of the question you and the participants could have faced up to the situation and answered the criticism straight out. I don't have any problems myself with a skin show that promotes sexy long legged girls and also comic books, but trying to slip around the problem with half veiled apologies and witticisms does not fulfill the purpose of the article. I thought that Angelique Trouvere made the most honest statements of the batch, she said she was a bit of an exhibitionist and loved doing this sort of program. Great. The most interesting comments regarding the character itself, which, let us not forget, was the inspiration for the travelling skin show in the first place, were made by Wendy Pini, who seems to at least to have read some of the books and looked beyond the superflous adventures into the character itself, something that cannot be said, at least from reading this article, of the other girls. Even the creator, Thorne, seemed very uncomfortable about the whole proposition. I wish again that this article could have been tied together a little tighter and run with a little more cynicism and adversary investigation. Still, lest I sound too harsh, I thought it was well written and a pretty good piece.

Roger Klorese's thoughts on Teen Titans were interesting but did not go far enough. I realize that wasjust a short column, but I wish he could be persuaded to explain his concepts into a full length article.

The X-Men index. Again, who the hell cares? What purpose is an index, a complete story by story index in a general feature fanzine? Especially when you didn't even run an X-Men article go go with it. Not to mention that the X-Men have been indexed many times before. Where is the new, useful, usable information that this provides? The urge to index something seems to be inherent in newer fan editors. When I first started in sf fandom back in the late fifties I ran indexes on a lot of stuff, old fanzines, pulp magazines, sf authors, then I discovered that nobody gave a damn, nobody. So I stopped doing it and devoted the space to things more of interest to the readers. If you are determined to continue indexing things then I suggest you join the indexing apa, which is run by Gene Reed. (SEE the apa listings this issue, all interested. --B.D.) These people in that apa are real freaks on indexing, they index all sorts of things, and some of it, stripped outside of a genzine, filed as indexes with proper presentations, some of it is useful stuff. But please, don't put indexes in general fanzines. If you think I'm being a hard hearted bastard here why not poll your readership. Ask your friends. Better yet, ask if anybody, anybody at all, has actually used this index for anything. And please abide by their decision and the grand vote total you get.

("The Perez interview was split basically because of planning out the pages, I typed it last, misjudged, and had to split a section of it off. // About movie and tv reviews, I see nothing wrong in comparing your opinions with others, and commenting accordingly. That is the basic thread in an intellectual learning. // About indexes, I myself can't stand doing them. If I was deciding, I'd say no to comic title reviews (artist indexes are useful, as are character appearances). I am planning to run tv show indexes (i'm working on AMERICA 2-NIGHT and MONTY PYTHON indexes myself). But I'll do what you suggest, and poll the readers. Well, do you want to see comic title indexes or not? Let me know your vote." --Bill-Dale)

Firestorm the first nuclear man? Jeeze, this will come as a big shock to Dr. Solar, Atoman, Atomic Thunderbolt, Blue Lightening, Neutro and all the other atomic age super heroes.

Wow, AFTA is sure a useful public servi fanzine. I always thought beavers flew down to the coast of Brazil during the winter, where the females got fertilized and then flew back in the spring to build those dams and beaver lodges where they hatched the beaver eggs. Now Isee that they swim up river just like the brontosaur aus. Amazing, not to say ~~astounding~~ analoging.

I also enjoyed your fan definitions and explanations. One correction, FAFIA is supposed to stand for fading away from it all. FAFIA means to have a bit of a laps in your fan activity, unintentional as it were. The big danger of course is that FA often leads to GAFIA or worse.

Jim Hogan makes some interesting points on comics fandom. I concur 100 percent th one of the major problems with comic fans is that they try to foster false sophistic-tion and maturity on a hobby which is basically just for fun. However, a lot of fans are teenagers or just getting out of their teen age years, and having to face peer pressure, not to say weird stares and glares from store people when you drop by every week or two and buy thirty or so bucks worth of comic books is rather embarrassing. The urge to make the hobby seem important and adult and sophisticated can have some really disastrous results. The ultimate disastrous result has been to poi out to the outside world that comic books are worth a lot of money, therefore they are as legitimate a hobby as stamps and coins. The result of course has helped the escalating price spiral and means that nowadays even ninety year old grannies in the back woods know that comics are worth big bucks. So if you walk in some place a

R
Caldwell
Ratman and Rabid

"Raisin? Did he say raisin?"

"No, Spim, Rabid, not raisin!"

AFTA-SHOCKS (LETTERS) (continued)

ry to buy old comics, unless you are prepated to front enough money to get the wo youngest kids through college for four years at Yale rates, theythink you're a rip ff artist trying to cheat them. This is carrying prestige just a bit too far.

The business of comic books is to Mak e Money. Nothing else. Nothing else. The fact that there are many people in the comics industry who happen to care about the stuff they produce and what sort of material comes out under their nameprints is an interesting sideline, but in the end, the only thing that matters to comic book publisher is whether books make money. Now it sometimes happens that creative, innovative, unusual and mature subject matter will sell comics. But very often it will not and smart editors will turn that crap off the moment it shows it's a definite money loser. The strength and charm of the comic book, as with any form of popular throw away literature (altho at 35¢ a shot it may be out of the throw away class by now) is that the stories are entertaining and exciting and satisfying to the readers, and that, sometimes without the creators even realizing it, they create characters and stories that are good enough to find acceptance with adult readers as well. Comic books in the forties were not concerned with mature story themes. The stories were written by people who enjoyed producing comics and produced what they thought ought to sell well and still satisfy them. The results are often very good, often not. In the fifties, and sixties the same trends have produced comics that were very very good and also good time flops. I don't think it should be the business of comic writers and artists to deliberately attempt to create ultra mature or significant social statements with comic books. When you aim over the heads of the mass of your readership, deliberately, you not only sabotage your sales base, but as we have seen in recent years, the results are very often big time flops as well.

SO, WHAT'S RED SONJA GOT THAT I AIN'T GOT?
2/77
Conan

Oh well, I guess I've rambled on about this stuff enough. Oh, I'm sorry to hear you are jacking the price of your fanzine up in order to cash in on sales to dealers. Do you really think you'll get that many sales? How many regular orders will be sacrificed in the process? Also, how moral is it (amen brother!) to ripoff those god fearing trufen who send in for AFTA because they want an issue, specifically by name ask for it, at full price, while giving forty and fifty percent discounts to loathsome comic dealers (baby killers, all of them)?

--Bob Jennings, ed. COMIC WORLD, RFD 2,
Whiting Road, Dudley, MA 01570

("I am not jacking the price up of AFTA to cash in on sales to dealers. With this issue, I will lose a great deal of money (slightly less on quantity orders, only because of the postage involved, which is a major issue now) no matter who orders AFTA. I sell $1.50 single copies and $1.00 quantity orders (min. order 10), I don't think that a 33% discount is excessive, and that I'm catering to dealers. I mostly plan to sell to small bookstores. By doing so, it is easier all around, I don't have to pay the postage, envelopes, and mailing labels for individual copies, my readers don't have to write out a check for $1.50 if their local bookstore carries AFTA, I don't have to advertise AFTA to get up mail orders or write countless letters to people who don't even want it (add the cost of postage to the total), and the bookstores, God help them, most of them need it, can make a few bucks in the process. Either way, I just about break even. There is no conspiracy to screw the small fan, and go commercial with AFTA. I can guarantee that. As to comics, true, comics are a business, but there seems to be a rule against experimentation and professionalism, and this only really damns the comics industry, because their audience (8-14 year olds) are going over in droves to tv and movies and not spending money on comics anymore, which means lower circulations, and even less experimentation. Now, if they would just experiment with packaging comics such that they would appeal to the 18-35 year old group, they should yield tremendous sales. Look at HEAVY METAL, GASM, and the WARREN magazines. They don't look like comics, and someone in his 20's isn't as hesitant or embarrassed to buy it off the racks at the newsstand."
--Bill-Dale)

My eyebrows went up at your review of EXTRA HEAVY NEWS, when you say I see "fandom as a literary counterculture" and that "the articles are hardly what you would call fan oriented." That's just your own interpretation, Marcinko! I may have a different view on what fandom is than you, but my lights, EHN is dintinctly fan-oriented. Not every article is about comics or science fiction-- but there will be some sort of tie-in no matter what. I don't think I want to get into what a counterculture is, or if there really is such a thing...

If you're interested in complaints, here's a fairly minor one relating to Frank Veripapa and FANTASY UNLIMITED. As you probably know, Frank actually began soliciting material some time ago, and in January 1977 I sent him two short strips. After that

AFTA-SHOCKS (LETTERS) (continued)

I never heard anything more from him, and only in AFTA #1 do I discover that FANTASY UNLIMITED is finally out. I assume he decided not to use my strips, which is okay, but I would have appreciated hearing from him one way or the other! I sent him a letter some time last summer but got no reply...

I strongly disagree with Jim Hogan's "Truth About Fans," in fact I'm not even sure it's the truth. In his classification, I would fall into the "hyper-fan B" category--"The most destructive influences in comics." I do feel I have a "duty(and right)" to oppose (not "condemn") the comics industry. But in fact, if his classification is meant to apply to someone like me, he totally misconstrues my motives, slanting his discussion in such a negative way. Now I realize he didn't have me specifically in mind, but is generating a category in order to lump a lot of us together and cast aspersions on us. Not necessarily you, the article communicates, but if you, then the shoe fits. Well I'm just trying to say the shoe doesn't fit.

The comix industry included newsstand comics, syndicated cartoons, animation, and certain kinds of books and illustrations. Of course, comix are used in advertising and promotion, not to say propoganda. In most cases, the concept of the industry is to provide comics on demand--whatever happens to be wanted. In no way does the comix industry provide for a natural uncontrolled medium, since ordinarily its product was strongly controlled and channeled in some specified direction. In some points it seems this rule is observed in a salutory or indifferent way or not observed at all, especially on the fringers of or outside the "system." This provides for areas of spontaneity and being different. To some extent, fandom lends itself to uncontrolled off-shoots of the industry, as well as to circumvention of the industry. However for the most part it follows a feeble, shallow course indirectly controlled by the media of industry. But in a more liberated form, it overlaps varios things: the unindustrialized folk traditions, the tradition of rational critique from independent sources. A way of having fun, definitely, and also one in which good deeds might be done. In recent years, fandom could be seen as a credible avant garde.

--Rick Howe, ed. EXTRA HEAVY NEWS, 217 Burroughs
Av., Beaufort, SC 29902

("I agree with you, and I'm sorry about any misunderstanding that may have resulted from my review of EHN, I did say many nice things about it. It is just that it is a very hard zine to describe in normal fannish vocabulary. It is quite worthwhile. Get it, folks." --Bill-Dale)

"Why I Love America" is nothing more than generalizations. You make the fatal mistake of assuming that a country of 217 million can be judged by just a handul of people. For instance, you state that the tires belonging to a homosexual was cut. But by whom? Did every single one of us (all 217 mill.) come out to slash the tires? No. Just a few sick people. In all likelihood, .000001% of this country's population. And in New York, "they"will kill you if you are a fag. Who are they? All 18 million New Yorkers? No, just a few sick people. And likewise, the graffiti at Rutgers. No matter where you go, not only in this country, but in any part of the world, you will find people who are sick.

You make swipes at "affirmative actions." I agree that it is somewhat condescending to minorities. But it is not just to put them in their place, or to fill quota for government grants. It is to try to correct former wrongs. And this helps make America great. Maybe we made mistakes. I'm sorry about slavery. I'm sorry that Martin Luther King was assassinated. We can't change history. But we can learn from the past mistakes, and make the present better. Blacks, Jews, what have you, are not "put in their place." My city is strongly Mormon. But some of the most successful lawyers, bankers, etc.here are Jews. In American history, many successful people were not American-born Protestants. All ethnic groups are given a chance in America. Orientals, who are ethnically and culturally different from the "WASP power structure," have flourished under our freedom and free enterprise. In fact, the average Japanese-American Family is more affluent than the average WASP-American family. Not only that, 25% of all Black-American families make over $12,000 yearly.

The main reason for this is that they are given rights. How about Blacks in South Africa? They are dehumanized. Do we require blacks to carry passes to justify their presence? Do we pay them a mere fraction of what a white man (or woman) makes

we "ban" them, and refuse them the ght to peaceably protest? No! We let hem have all their rights. Don't give me y pre-Civil War (or even pre-civil rights) ap. Like I said, that's all in the past. rtin LutherKing could have never told 200, 0 people that he had a dream in South rica. Even in several black ruled nations, would have been restricted from this tivity. In fact, America, white ruled as it may be, gave Martin Luther King more opportunities than nations in Africa.

There is a group of extremely sick individuals, the KKK, who try to "put them in their place." But the KKK is very small, and is only in the South. But there are groups all over Great Britain who hate the Pakistanis. A majority of British people would like to stop their immigration immediately, and a slightly smaller number would like to deport them (all 2 million) And in Sweden, West Germany, and other industrialized countries.

I could go on forever showing you how tolerant Americans are. But basically, I want you to realize that you cannot malign an entire country because of a few isolated incident. And you can't judge it by its past. Countries, like people, change. Don't make sarcastic comments about National Guardspersons shooting students. That was eight years ago. Even in that short span, we've changed. We are out of Viet Nam. We are not getting involved in the Middle East, or Angola, or Ethiopia. We've learned our lesson. Besides, the war was the responsibility of just a few irresponsible people in power. But as Americans, we can change that. We exercised our rights, and protested a war that was wrong. We voted out of office the people who got us into it. The government doesn't control us, we control it. Not many countries can still claim that. I sincerely do love America. If you really hate it, I suggest that you try living in a few other countries. Then, maybe you will realize, that despite a few sick people, this is still the best country in the world.

--Cornell Kimball, NOT a member of the John Birch Society, PO Box 8168, Salt Lake City, UT

RICK BURCHETT
JIM McPHERSON
INTER-FAN

("I do not hate America. In fact, I was not saying in WHY I LOVE AMERICA that everyone in America is sick. Ijust wanted to point out (through the changing character of the narrator) that there are quite a few people who believe, as the author does, that 'everything is fixed.' Perhaps you are one of those people, perhaps not. But it is my belief that when any injustice occurs, there is a specific situation that precipitated it. And that WE, yes, all 217 million of us, by OUR APATHY, must share in the responsibility. People don't like taking the responsibility for crime, but ask yourself about a situation in which say a woman is mugged, and raped, and 10 people watch from their windows at what is happening. Are you telling me that these 10 people weren't responsible in some way, because they DIDN'T call for help or attempt to intervene. This is an extreme example, I admit.

But can't you see the danger in America is-the-best-country-in-the-world-and-we can-do-nothing-wrong-patriotism? Runaway patriotism, I call it. When you tell yourself that nothing is wrong, and our life is perfect, you precipitate a slideback effect. People who were once very socially aware and involved in the 60's are now apathetic.

I do not make "swipes at 'affirmative action.'" I make swipes at affirmative action which is nothing more than lip service. We have a number of campuses at Rutgers University. We must have a quota for state aid of so-many Blacks and minorities. Instead of dispersing this 30%-35% of minorities around (which is true equal opportunity), a good majority of the blacks have been placed on a single campus, and a campus that has the most inferior living quarters and classrooms. You may applaud such an action. I still find it discriminatory.

Discrimination is still with us. It is just more sophisticated than it was in the 50's. And more mainstream.

The KKK only in the South? Tell that to the president of the KKK in New Brunswick, NJ. Do you want his name? He's quite open and vocal.

Also, when I look at the NAZI party and their efforts to march in Skokie, Illinois, I kind of wonder whether the number of "sick" people are really on the decrease. It seems that since about 1972, there has been a swing back to the old ways, the old prejudices. If we have learned so much from Martin Luther King about civil rights, then why are gay people being persecuted right and left by, of all people, THE CHURCH and its spokespersons?" --Bill-Dale)

The section on Red Sonja and all the hassle connected with the sexist attacks was great. I've been following this for awhile in the Buyer's Guide and I love a good fight between fans. Keeps fandom from becoming stale. Personally, I like a well built, good looking woman without many clothes on. I guess that is the definition of a sexist. But in my dealing with females in the past and with my wife over the years, I certainly would not be considered a sexist...or would I?

LOVE Monty Python. Have ordered Kim Johnson's THE COMPLATE MONTY PYTHON and am looking forward to it very much. Are you aware of a British BBC radio program from the late 60's early 70's called I'M SORRY, I'LL READ THAT AGAIN. Just funnier than hell, with John "Otto" Cleese, Graham Garden (occasionally), Tim-Brooke Taylor, Bill Oddie (who eventually created the Goodies group), Jo Kendall (a woman), David Hatch--these were the normal group. The scripts were written by this group, often with the help of Eric Idle, Graham Chapman, Michael Palin. So you can see, this large bunch of comedians were often together and with a bit of luck, Python could have had different members. Brooke-Taylor is hilarious!

--Dick Klemensen, 707 Greenbrier Road,
Waterloo, IA 50703, ed. LITTLE SHOPPE OF HORRORS

("Yes, I'm familiar with I'm SORRY I"LL READ THAT AGAIN. I have been listening to it on a public radio station in New York which has been re-running it, for what must be on 3 years now. If anyone in New York area is interested, the station is WNYC-fm, 93.9, and I'M SORRY I'LL READ THAT AGAIN is on Tuesdays at 9:30-10:00. Also WNYC runs THE GOON SHOW (with Peter Sellers, and Spike Milligan among others) on Thursdays at 10:30-11:00 pm. Are there any stations you others know of that run any British comedy series? I'll print the info in AFTA." --Bill-Dale)

In regard to your article on page 89: Your personal right to dislike Anita Bryant and her "crusade" notwithstanding, I felt your personal vendetta against Christianity was a bit uncalled for in this type of magazine. It struck me from the way things were written, that you felt everybody who read the article would naturally immediately agree with you. Of course, this is your fanzine and it's your right to do with it what you want, but often times an editor can offend readers (either offend them personally or offend things they regard highly) in the way they present their views. I don't really know why you felt the need to take up an entire page making fun of Christiantiy by presenting segments of that tract out of context and preluded by your sarcastic comments. In any case, the form you reproduced (check here, etc.) and the idea of that sort of form may be somewhat facetious, but the message is an important one. In my own life,

Secrease 77

IF

and in the lives of others around me, I have seen works and changes and things that have shown me that Jesus is more than just somebody out of history who started up this strange institution called the church which has since become perverted and almost a diet in itself. I'm not ashamed to be a Christian because all the questions about who I am, why I'm here, and all that is answered now in a way not available in other so-called religions. I don't believe Christianity is a religion, anyway. It's a relationship--a personal relationship with the God who made us, and who cared enough about us to pay the penalty for our own disobedience so that we might be reunited with Him forever.

I can't ask you to believe all this, Bill-Dale, but I will pray that you might at least see what Christianity is all about in a different light than you did in AFTA #1.

--Randall D. Larson, ed. FANDOM UNLIMITED,
REBORN (looking at sf and fantasy from a Christian viewpoint), 774 Vista Grande Av.
Los Altos, CA 94022.

("I thank you sincerely for expressing your opinions so honestly on the ol' page 89 issue part of the fault is indeed mine. I really was not clear at the precise point of the piece. It was not to damn all Christians, to destroy Christianity, but only certain (very specific) types which inhabit the political hierarchy and membership in churches. The point of page 89 was this--that Anita Bryant has used the Bible for a campaign of hate, and that she has taken things in the Bible and tried to prove that her persecution of homosexuals is right and sanctioned by God. I don't believe it is ever right to hate. Christ taught us above all else to love those around us, especially our enemies and those who are different (for they are most in need of compassion and kindness). A lot of people misinterpret Christ to their own ends. Now I don't claim I'm an expert. The narrator (not me) at one point suggests that Christ was gay-- I did this because I wanted to show people you could flip the coin and do the same number

a is doing on us. You could prove Christ
gay, taking quotes out of context, too.
e last thing I want to be is an enemy
ours, or to have you think AFTA is
rking on a campaign to slander Christians.
Anita, that's all.)
do think the idea and execution of the
SAVED form was silly, that by checking
x, this personal relationship between
Christ, and your brothers could be
essed in that way. True, a committment
as that must come from the HEART, not
pencil.

f it means anything, I am saved, or
born, or whatever word you choose to describe
dicating your life to Christian ideals of
ve and mercy with. I truly believe that
rist and his message could save the world.
My problem, however, is that I don't
end a lot of time in church singing (I
ways used to get into arguments over all
rts of things, and now with my stand on
y rights, I'm not a church member anymore)
instead I am trying to preach love instead of Christ. I think that is the big problem in people's misinterpreting Christ. Christ never wanted to preach Christ. But yet, you have people saying "Jesus saves." Jesus can't do a damn thing. You must look at Jesus and make a decision to serve that ideal. Personally, I would rather teach what Christ taught (justice, love, peace) than stick "I believe in Christ" bumperstickers all over the place. Christ has been exploited and merchandized by so many people, it is time for a real critical and deep evaluation of the Church's real role in improving the condition of man. I think the Church is very ineffective in changing things today. The hippies in the 60's did more to foster equality and peace than the Christian Church has done in 20 years." --Bill-Dale)

-Scalphunter
Stamie '77
IF

Dear Dale,

HA! You didn't fool anybody with your "explanation" on page 27. We knowyou were part of the conspiracy to kill Bill Marcinko, and we intend to see to it that you get the recognition you deserve. Furthermore, we invite you to attend a mass murder at Phoenixcon to do away with... Sorry. Excuse me. I've seen Psycho 18 times and AFTA brought out the Anthony Perkins in me. I'm perfectly normal now, except for yelling "La Chiva Estalló" from time to time.

It's odd. The opinion in AFTA I seemed to either totally agree or totally disagree with. No mikkle ground. Sorry about the ~~typos~~ creative word usage. Please, please, send me #2! I'll keep sending AFAE BSAAMETO to you, I'll keep sending long inane letters like this, I'll write a review or something, just for Ghod's sake don't make me send money. How about paranoia? You like paranoia, you want paranoia? Paranoia I've got to spare. Here, I've put five psionic grams of paranoia in this envelope. If that isn't enough to get me #2, just write me. I'll send more. Just don't ask me to send more than 10 psi grams a month. I might become (gasp!) normal (or something worse).

"The Death of etc..." was funny. I mean really funny. I mean really that I laughed out loud. I wish I could write like that. I think you've seen "Love and Death" once too often.

I totally agreed with the Spy Who Loved Me review, even down to individual things liked/disliked. Especially about Hamlisch. Put me in touch with Mike France, I wanna start a Marvin Hamlisch Hate Club.

You'll notice I'm not commenting about the comic articles because I didn't read them because I'm not a comic fan. No snobbishness intended, it's just ~~that I think people who read comics are mindless idiots~~ not my thing. I did read Comic Stop*Light and liked it, too.

I believe your second car schtick is probably the only second Kennedy assassination satire that I really could like, the other one being on Saturday Night LIVe. Oh yeah, and the National Lampoon issue.

AFTA-SHOCKS (LETTERS) (continued)

I liked "A Fan Primer". Try convincing Larry Niven of paragraph 4, though. What about xeroxing? You've hurt my egoboo. Seriously (never thought I'd see myself typing that word) would you consider submitting something to AB? I really like your writing style, and besides, ~~I'll publish anything~~ I still need material.

In the words of Steve Martin, "I'm sorry, but I am ANGRY!! How dare you even compare SF, Horror and Fantasy to CFQ! The difference is enormous. Also, I have a personal hatred for the editor, Doug Wright. If you haven't heard of his evil deeds yet, I can always write you a long tirade about it.

Caldwell
&Williams

Wouldn't it be weird if WSA turned out to be a fraud?

I liked your review of CE3K, very well written and all, though I don't agree with you. "You aren't right! You just sound right!"--Peanuts.

You know, I agree with you entirely about World's Greatest Lover, but I still got my money's worth because of one line: "Lillian Gish is in those hills!" More on that later.

Agreed with you totally about Annie Hall, though this isn't the first time that the really serious side of Woody Allen has come out, the other time being his one-act DEATH. By the way, have you seen "WHAT'S UP, TIGER LILY?" A nearby art theatre had a Woody Allen Film Festival, two films a week on Fridays. I went every week, though I never got anywhere with the girl I saw them with, even after "PLAY IT AGAIN, SAM."

Hate to keep agreeing with you, but your views/experiences with THE ROCKY HORROR PICTURE SHOW are the same as mine. Exactly. Also, I like all the music people you listed, though lately I've been getting into classical, Mahler especially. By old-fashioned about sex, you wouldn't mean like a D.W. Griffith movie, would you. I have a very weird way of wishing that male/female relationships exist. The way I wish it was is like in D.W. Griffith films, Lillian or Dorothy Gish optional but helpful. Does any of this make sense? It's just that your statement intrigues me. Sorry, my brain is a little muddled right now. Well, I've managed to confuse myself. I don't know what I'm writingMy brain hurts... I agreed totally with the Screen Horizons stuff. I can't believe Scott Loy saw the same Hobbit I did. That's the first favorable review of it I've seen anywhere.

OK. It's morning now, and I'm a little more In Control. Interesting thing about your bio: I am currently in the process of being hit by spitballs, not picked for kickball. Well, actually a little different in material, but the intent is clear: I am a social outcast. What I was trying to expla in the previous paragraph is that I wish it was like the Good Old Days where to get the girl you had to slay the dragon, fight the Germans, whatever. Does that clear it up a bit? Pschotically,

--~~Norman Bates~~, David Lewison, 428 Via Los
Miradores, Redondo Beach, CA 90277
Dave is ed. of AFAE BSAAMETO, recommended.

I am writing to you for my little sister Gracie because something awfull hapened to her and I am afraid to tell mother about it. I am 15 years old and Gracie is 13 and we live in Brooklyn. Gracie is deaf and dumb and biger than me but not very smart on account of being deaf and dumb. She plays on the roof of our house and dont go to schoo except to deaf and dumb school twice a week on tuesdays and thursdays. Mother makes her play on the roof because we dont want her to get run over as she aint very smart. Last week a man came on the roof and did something dirty to her. She told me about it and I dont know what to do as I am afraid to tell mother on account of her being lible to beat Gracie up. I am afraid that Gracie is going to have a baby and I listened to her stomack last night for a long time to see if I could hear the baby but I couldn't. If I tell mother she will beat Gracie up awfull because I am the only one who loves her and the last time when she tore her dress they loked her in the closet for 2 days and if the boys on the blok hear about it they will say dirty things like they did on Peewee Cono sister the time she got caught in the lots. So please what would you do if the same hapened in your family.

Yours truly,
Harold S.

The most enjoyable aspect of your zine was the listings and reviews of a vast spectrum of publishing.

AFTA has to be on the crossroads of fandoms, very few zines have had such near complete listings of apa's, adzines, newszines, etc. You will definitely assume an appreciated spot in fandom if every issue is of the same quality. But first drop all this Dead Brother nonsense, first!

A fan hoax is a waste of time. It detrac energy from many other time-consuming project that cry out for attention, such as AFTA. Spend the time on more reviews than the sick jokes about Death. I enjoy jokes about Deat usually. I saw Woody Allen in Love and Death eight times. But a fan hoax about a dead brother turns me off. I almost did not want to support your efforts with AFTA due to the Dead Brother thing. I think you will receive more support from others, once you bury the thing. Then, I think, the support you deserve, will arrive.

--David Mruz, editor, MINDROT

A-SHOCKS (LETTERS) (continued)

I think the hefty compilation of erial made the laying out and hanical work of putting it all ether something of a problem: s is obvious from the rather confused it was all juggled together.

Enjoyed it immensely, however. was something like going through an attic-- sorts of stuff hidden away in obscure le corners.

There was some really funny stuff in it-- then I'm partial to death jokes (as 'll notice in my own zine) The only good e is a dead joke, I say.

I think the only real suggestion I could ke would be to improve the artwork you ature; more of it and of better quality. the valuable listing of fanzines in this sh, I happen to know were zines which eature a wide variety of good artwork-- letter to the artists whose work you dmire would give you a lot of nice stuff o print.

The second suggestion would be to drop he comic reviews except for analyses of those ooks you thought especially good or bad. So uch is produced that is routine work, and hese deserve no benefit from special consideration.

--Charles T. Smith, ed., PAN-GALACTIC CORNUCOPIA, 3136 Hennepin Av. S., Minneapolis, MN 55408

Reading the editorial, are you sure it wasn't your alter ego who died in that car wreck? Because, really, fans have alter egos. Anyway, I'm sorry to hear that he's dead, and gone...to that remote region.* I expect to live forever! How? By smoking Viceroys. Anyway, Zelda Clitshitz should have asked to be buried with him in the same tomb...this is the way faithfulness after death was done in Egypt. Of course, after Anubius the practice took on a different, somewhat Thorne Smithian touch. But it's still as good as it used to be. Emma Counterculture, if she's the same one that I've seen in the blue movies, is a chick that I've always been interested in...is she still free?

Try to avoid vomiting when you get sick over purity. You give the enemy too much room for contention. Also, puking at tasteless attitudes toward death can be staved off by the tranquilizers and relaxants they give friends of the deceased. Your remarks about stiffs reminds me of Dylan Thomas' line, "My Jack of Christ born thorny on the tree, the words of Death were drier than his stiff."

At first I thought your picture was of Pancho Perez, and I was about to ask "Where did he get the beard, from Jack Kirby or someone?" when I turned the page, and saw that it was George Perez, an artist whom I do not exactly revere. So I skipped it, unfortunately missing the illos as well, and saw the review of THE SPY WHO LOVED ME. My own criticism of this film is that it was too short, also I didn't like the omission of the theme and mood music "Black Betty, Black Betty, lam da lam" which was done in the studios, I suppose. I wouldn't criticize Jaws too much, if I were you. He's likely to get the jaws and come after you.

I think Red Sonja is much more interesting than the material written about her. For one thing, the writing is overdone but not accurate. Kind of what you might call inflated prose. Something wrong with the perspective on that photo, too... the legs look too short. The photo on the next page was provocative, tho...provoked me to wrath. Where did that scrawny wizard get all them nice chicks?

Fans are no longer required to publish an interview with Jack Kirby.

Superman vs. Ali sounds good...undefeatable strength vs. prettiness. I can see Superman in my imagination taking swats at what could only strike him as a butterfly, floating beautifully in the afternoon sun, and then the fooler as Ali moves in for the sting.

Hated the death of Mickey Mouse cartoon. Too brutal.

All in all, though, a good ish, reminiscent of the magazines I used to buy when I was out on the West Coast, that John Rechy and I used to have so much fun reading together. Hope to see more of them and I hope also that you like ACTIFAN.

--John Thiel, ed., ACTIFAN, 30 North 19th St.,
Lafayette, IN 47904

("John publishes ACTIFAN which is an incredibly helpful listing of fanzine editors, alphabetically by their zine (do I get in John?), a copy for a buck, I think."
--Bill-Dale)

Screen Horizons by Mark Burbey-- I agree with Mr. Burbey's philosophy that one should broaden their horizons as much as possible. By becoming a specialist in only one or two areas you're isolating yourself from a very exciting, complicated and awesome world. So far, so good. What I disagree with is Mr. Burbey's approach in presenting this position. He comes across very arrogant,"See how

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enlightened and intelligent I am, you cretins." style.This type of condescending writing usually only succeeds in insulting the reader who will continue to sip his Coke as he watches Space: 1999. Mr. Burbey also makes a glaring omission in his article. Sure, there are comic fans who can see no further than the four-color printed page in front of them, but what about the pseudo-sophisticates who will admire the inane paint drippings of Jack Pollack while condemning the work of Barry Smith and Howie Chaykin because they're "the ones who draw those funny books." --OR the English teachers who gasp if H.P. Lovecraft is mentioned in the same breath with Poe or Hawthorne. Mr. Burbey attacks the unwashed, unsophisticated masses while he leaves untouched the equally numerous pretentious defenders of ART who are just as ignorant and narrow-minded. Then again, maybe Mr. Burbey wrote the entire article tongue-in-cheek, in which case I have made a complete fool of myself. Well, sarcasm never works well on the printed page anyway.

Your essay "WHY I LOVE AMERICA" was well written, but it also was extremely bitter and coming at the end of the issue it left a very bad taste in my head. Perhaps it could have been more effective if it was placed near the middle of the issue. Here at the end, it stands out from the light-hearted matter that has come before. ("My precise intention. --Bill-Dale)

--Michael Walker, ed. IMAGES, 94 Eagle Street,
Brooklyn, NY 11222

Thanx for sending me AFTA #1. I have to tell you I really enjoyed reading it! There was plenty to read, too! Your fingers must be beat from pounding those keys. On the whole your mag was interesting and made for many nights of enjoyable reading (maybe a bit overwritten at times). I woke my folks at 2:00 a.m. two nights in a row with my laughter. The appearance of the book could be greatly improved by adding more artwork, reducing the amount of type on each page, using heavier cover stock, and trimming the pages.

Specifics: The "Bill's Death" schtick got to be a little droll, yet Psychiatrist's Reports, etc. made it less repetitive. I think maybe you should just cremate him and air out your kitchen.

AFTA struck me as both a fanzine and a satire of a fanzine. Example: "This used to be empty space, but not anymore" or "And Now the Obligatory Jack Kirby Interview." Great stuff!!

One of the highlights of the book was your WHY I LOVE AMERICA essay. Here, more than anywhere else, your style of writing and expression resemble Kurt Vonnegut. Is this done purposely? On page 81 you mention that you read Vonnegut. I'm an absolute Vonnegut addict, love his shit.

--Peppy White, ed, FANTA-FOLIO, 7612 Hogarth
Street, Springfield, VA 22151

("Yes, I am a big Vonnegut fan, as I hope my ravings next issue on him will show. My writing style has been effected by his, a think he is a supreme stylist, the way DePalma is for film. Even when he's not saying anything and being silly, it is just so much of a thrill just to read..." --Bill-Dale)

Dear B-D M:

(Ghod, even your initial are beginning to look obscene!)

Mazel Tov!! AFTA is the comics fandom event of the season. When I snatched issue one from the frumious grasp of the LPO, ("Livingston Post Office, Joe is a fellow Rutgers student. --Bill-Dale), I gortched and let out a yell to my roommate: AFTA! AFTA! Everyone in th post office gave me a strange look and shuffled away. From the cover on, I was grabbed.

Now that I have sforgled over the zine in general, I will go into detail.

COVER: A Grabber.

P. 2: Wow. Classy.

P. 3: Congratulation on your death. Keep it up.

P. 17 & 18: Your photo repro left something to be desired.

P. 29: Gulp! Khvorg!!! Shot the Printer!! Upside down and backwards!! How dare he!

P. 31: The Best Jack Kirby Interview Ever!

P. 32: All those Reviews!! All Those Reviews!!

P. 47: Jim Hogan's incisive views on Fandom are going to cause one hell of a controversy in your lettercol. (Personal Note: I am essentially a comicsfan only by associatio and am therefore somewhat of a watcher from outside. I do note, however, that the view has some interesting correlations and discrepancies with the world of SFandom. I'd like to see someone who is deeply into both (Yourself, maybe?) write an in-depth comparison of the two subcultures with respect to their organizations and economic impact. Might make some sociologist one hell of a PhD dissertation.)

P. 59: Kruchkow and Higgins strike again! Wow!!

P. 71: Excellent nonsnobbish film reviews.

P. 65: Your section on film news is incredible. Where do you get all that info... I lust for your sources.

P. 72: S*E*M*P*R*I*N*I ???

P. 76: Stoney's Mickey Mouse attracted everybody within eyeshot on the campus bus.

P. 77: etc. Best article I've seen on Rocky Horror. Note: Be careful selling copies of tapes. The legal nasties may get you for it.

P. 82: "You may have noticed that this issue is 88 pages long..." ...???

P. 89: A Word of Criticism: I cant figure out what you trying to do/get at/get away with in reprinting that religious comic. Most of the people I have shown AFTA have responded negatively to its appearance. If it was meant seriously ((a theory which is not supported by any other items in the zine)) it appears out of place. If it was connected to the Anita Bryant parody, the connection was not readily visible. If it was to stand by itself to show the awfulness of religious comics, it should have been blurbed somehow. Anywho, the page struck me and others as an ambiguous turn-off ((Win some, lose some, some get rained out.))

P. 94: "Why I Love America" was an unexpectedly powerful piece. It took a while to switch into gear, but once I figured out what the hell was going on, I was grabbed and moved.

P. 96: Good bacover.

P. 97: ....

--Joe Zitt, ed., CONTACT: SF, (a really
excellent sf zine, no bull), 459 Albin
Court, Ridgewood, NJ 07450

("As to page 89, see my replies to Campbell and Larson. The connection between the prose and the cartoon was tenuous at best, the only logic being that both Bryant and the author of the strip were misinterpreti the intent of the Bible ad absurdum." --Bill-Dale)

-SHOCKS (LETTERS) (continued)

ots of strange stuff, not everything one d want a steady diet of, though it was to find out what has happened to all my rite comics. I gave up comics when I was ve because of the constant influx of new r heroes was somehow depressing (I mean, many superpowers can one have?), and use it was all becoming very 'camp', the Batman show. Can't stand anything . My favorite was Green Lantern. He had at costume (though I heard a rumor that changed somewhere later on in the '60's) I liked the character generally. Nemesis also good, though he came and went pretty k. I disliked JLA & any other groups; individuals much more appealing. But very best comics were the creepy-crawliies ghosties. They didn't seem to get so ged down as did all those super-heroes. Yegads. I didn't know my memory was so d. Isn't one supposed to be ashed of having d comics? Like getting caught buying a rator or something. But I remember all se comics with a great deal of fondness gratitude because I found them imaginative informative--quite contrary to popular nion, which ain't ever worth a damn anyhow.

But I'm rambling here...the thing with AFTA that it seems to have much more potential n just being a fanzine. It's hard to say the first which direction it might take, use it has several options. So many comics movie reviews can become tedious; maybe might be limited to just covering the e significant items (note I did not say ular, as there is a great deal of difference between significant and popular). More t would be nice. More articles similar to e WHY I LOVE AMERICA one...in other words, re showing a social conscience, and it won't hurt to show a bit more of it. Heavens knows, hardly anyone else seems to.

I saw Scott Loy's review of The Hobbit. I disagree on almost ~~all~~ everything (Freudian slip). Except for Gandalf and Smaug, the whole thing was a travesty. Such imagination as Tolkien's writing inspires just can't be transmitted to film in any way. Better left in the head. Make the READ it, make them see their own internal pictures, don't encourage anyone to do it for them. I've noticed that the transition of an idea from one medium to another is very often unsuccessful, not to say disastrous.

I see any mention of Dune/conspiciously absent.

Ahh...Monty Python news. The Holy Grail... a stroke of genius. A new (and probably more accurate) way of seeing the Arthurian legend and times. Several people I've talked to claimed they couldn't stand to see it all. Must have offended their sense of romanticism. And the viewers I was with laughed at all the wrong places...Which reminds me, when I went to see Star Wars (one of only two movies I've seen in the past 2 years), it was a Sunday matinee, and all the kids around me were saying, "What's That? What's That? Qu'est-ce que c-est, papa?" at ever change of scene. Dammit, in my day, I used to sit through every show of the Outer Limits with my mouth shut, figuring out what was going on as the show progressed. Kids got no imagination these days.

I skimmed the Red Sonja article. In many ways, feminists & Anita Bryant & Robespierre have a lot in common: Do Not Enjoy Thyself. If you can look at a rose, do you look instead at a thistle to make yourself morally better? Nonsense. Feminism is a good thing, but not when it starts advocating censorship, as is happening more & more lately.

--P.J. Kemp, ed. SAMISDAT, Box 10,
Brigham, Quebec, CANADA JOE 1JO

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I loved your coverage of the Red Sonja "problem" and concept as presented through the show. First, I don't read RS because I don't like barbarian stories. I think CONAN and SWORD OF are excellent publications, but barbarians just don't do anything for me, no matter how well done.

For a moment, I'd like to ignore the "problem" and discuss the character; I really think Roy Thomas wrongly conceived her, I think the whole rape/man-hatred which marked her "origin" as a "hero" was just too much. The character is too hard, and more importantly, too cold. Though she sidesteps the whole "amazonian" school of thought, she is also hardly a positive image. She really is to be pitied, which is a shame, since she is a very impressive character, even as she is. At least the article made me think about her, and sparked enough interest for me to buy a few issues to see if these ignorant opinions hold water.

Now about the show: I think its just marvelous. In America, we find amazingly socially exceptable ways to play dress-up and pretend to be all the things we want to be in our soul of souls. Sha Na Na want to hold onto something that's dead and gone, Dolly Parton gets off by dressing like a combination cheap hooker and caricature of a country singer. It doesn't hurt anyone, and it even gives some people pleasure. What could possibly be wrong with that?

That's how I think of the SONJA show, a lot of fun for everyone from the audience to the people in it. I don't know about you, but I'd like to dress in the whole black cape, cowl outfit right out of Zorro, with a bullwhip curled around a shoulder. I think everyone has a secret fantasy just waiting to be unleashed. Another good thing about fandom, we can all be what we want to be; nobody gets hurt and nobody tells the other painful truth's.

Which brings up another interesting point of fandom: I remember reading that you never had any big hero's when you were growing up. Neither did I. I can't speak for you, but I wanted to be the hero, I wanted to be apart of all the fantastic stuff going on inthe comics or television. In your own head, you're the greatest of heroes.

About the only thing I disliked about AFTA #1 was the nasty swipes at Alan Light and Murray Bishoff. Completely ignoring the matter if all or any of your comments are true or not, was it necessary to say anything bad about another human being that hasn't harmed you, or committed any serious offense against anyone? Really, we all have our slight personality deviations, but both gentlemen (I believe) help to produce a necessary and important publication, and until they start molesting children, there's no reason to publicly print your opinions about them.

Really, is Alan's salary the business of anyone? And does it REALLY matter if Murray's literary talents are somewhat lacking, as long as his column reports fannish news first and most accurate?

About your comments about America...you're 100% right. I have a couple of phrases though you might be interested in hearing: "America is the greatest, best nation in the world... that tells you a little something about the shape of the world" and "The end of civilization as we know it is upon us--thank goodness"

--Steven Alan Bennett, 842 Hunt St., Akron,
OH 44306

("About Alan Light molesting children, Gary Groth might have something to say on that. About having heroes, well, truth to tell I did have some (see YES, I STILL READ COMICS) but I don't really emulate them that much (do I?), so you may be right about you and me wanting to be the hero, instead of the groupie. Dunno." --Bill-Dale)

("Since the mention of Marilyn Bethke in the RED SONJA piece and Jim Van Hise's picking up on it for AFTA's RBCC review, Marilyn and I have fought it out backstage. Although I asked Marilyn to write a complete rebuttal for AFTA #2. She sent me this..." --Bill-Dale)

Yes, I would like to write a letter of rebuttal; here it is:

Dear AFTA readers:

Re the article "Sexism and Red Sonja" -- I do read Red Sonja every month, and do (and did) know that it is co-written by a woman; I also know more about feminism than all the other principles combined; ask any of them who Sojourner Truth was. The only fact about me in the entire article was Thorne's statement that I throw up whenever I see him. That is true.

--Marilyn Bethke, 146 Witherspoon, Princeton, NJ
08540

"Sexism and Red Sonja" presented only one side and was not without bias. I am glad that Mr. Thorne and the ladies enjoy the creative expression they derive from the character and the show, and I am glad they have attaine success and notoriety. However, they can argue until they are blue in the face, Red Sonja, in her current incarnation was birthed for success. The character is so ludicrous as any other superhero or heroine in comics today. Red is even more so because she is not a convincing female character. All she is, in her current incarnation, a female version of Conan. Nothing less, nothing more. Her first appearance, as conceived by Smith and Thomas, was her best. She was more of a rogue, an adventureress. She isn't much more than a killing machine in a ridiculous bikini that must surely be a pain to wear. Wendy Snow sums it up best: "The males buy her because of her looks and her costume. They wonder if she's gonna fall out of it." I stand by what I say here and in THE SCENE in TBG. The cartoon on page 59 was absolutel tasteless. How in the world James Van Hise could say, "I thought it was funny." , is beyond me. I just don't think it should've been in a fanzine either. You may have had a bad experience with religion, but a fanzine is not the place to vent your anger. Your tirade on religion should not have been in a fanzine. No I didn't see it as satire, Jim.

--Roger Caldwell, 119 Mayflower Road,
Kingston, TN 37763

One thing that I was wanting to ask you--has Alan Light seen AFTA? I'd surely think this would be the kind of stuff he'd come after you for. (I wrote a degrading letter to the Comic Journal about Alan, and after that, myseriously, my sub was cancelled--hum! Do you think Alan doesn't like me??) I only mention Mr. Stupendous because when I was really active and was the WSA's pr man (they gave me a title like this: Assistant to the Acting Administrator, WSA Program, Public Relations Division!!) we got some good stuff on Alan, and some letters Alan had sent us. Also, I don't know if you received the recent issue of FEEDBACK, but Alan wrote them about some derogatory remarks they made about him. I just see him, in one word, as an asshole who is really taking himself very seriously. Did you see his picture in Film Collectors #1?? He was sitting behind a desk, with his shoes off. It was very funny.

--Brian Gray (Should I list your address, your sub may be mysteriously cancelled again, oh, hell, we're brave here at AFTA) 5711 S.
Gary Place, Tulsa, OK 74105

("About Alan, yes, I think he had his sense of humor removed when he was a child, consequently we have a great deal of fun making fun of him and Murray here at AFTA. He just takes himself too seriously. Did you see that letter he wrote to a little kid (as reported in THE COMICS JOURNAL #40) saying, "You have our contempt." Alan must have read AFTA, he wrote me and said quote "It's a fine zine," when he gave me the free ad in TBG #238. Why he would give a free ad to an editor who is not particula sympathetic (although not too serious) toward him is beyond me, perhaps he was on drugs at the time. Do you hear that-- DRUGS!!! (Oboy, there goes my sub)"
--Bill-Dale)

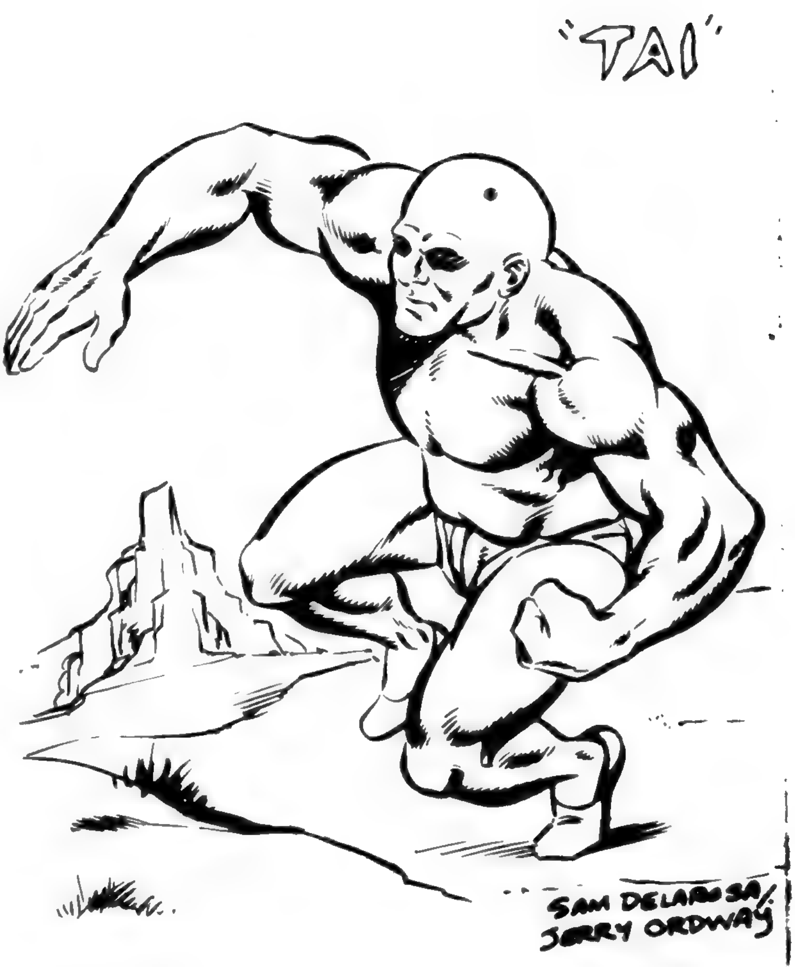
I imagine a lot of fans will take unkindly to your odd combination, in AFTA #1, of fannishness, faanishness, bad taste, and sexu deviation. The Bill-Dale thing became worse than tedious, in my opinion. I don't think

A-SHOCKS (continued)

s going to turn fandom
und, and it doesn't quite
nt it in the direction I'd
e to see fandom turned.
Something I missed in every
of your reviews was a longer
atment of the artwork.
sonally, I think it's the art-
k that makes the comic book
que, and above all the artwork
t we ought to criticize. Is
too much to ask that you and
r writers pay even equal
ention to artwork and
rrative? It's really frustra-
ng when you tell us to buy the
perman-Ali book for the Adams
t, having spent three quarters
your review on O'Neil's plot.
rilliant on all counts," says
Via regarding Tomb of Dracula
. He doesn't say a thing
out the artwork. Yet Wolfman,
've been told, gives only the
etchiest plot outlines ("Hulk-
ghts-men-for-two-pages" type
ing); whatever is brilliant
out TOD 63 (definitely inclu-
g its depection of Hell) must
e largely due to Gene Colan.
Another thing I'd like to see
s your running more longer
eviews. When Jim Crawford says,
Another waste of paper, time
nd money," he could've been
peaking of his own review.
've complained that you don't
iscuss the artwork sufficiently,
ut you could discuss the stories
n much greater depth as well.
uch too often, you and your
eviewers (like most writers in
andom, it's true) seem to mis-
ake a plot synopsis for a critique. I don't
ecall a single treatment of rhetoric, for
xample-- the kind of words a writer uses,
he rhythms, the tone, and so on. Also,
see too many conclusions (mostly super-
atives, which don't mean a lot) without
nough argument. Give more examples, and
xplain yourselves better.

--Chris Melchert, 212 N. Alfred St.,
Alexandria, VA 22314

("The reason I don't push for in-depth critiques is because I'm of the belief that comics writers are hacks and churn out scripts with no attention to rhythms, the tone, etc. Whenever I see an analysis of longer than 2 pages (2 AFTA pages, say) of a single comic, I wonder if the writer isn't caught up in this defensive overintellectualization process. I think comics are for kids, and most comics today have to strain to entertain and excite a 10 year old. It just doesn't seem right reading something in when it just isn't there." --Bill-Dale)



The "WHY I LOVE AMERICA" bit at the end summed up my own feelings about the way things have been happening the past few years. Any society that makes hit shows of crap like FANTASY ISLAND, THE LOVE BOAT, DONNY & MARIE, AND LAVERNE AND SHIRLEY; any society that can make KISS a million-selling rock group and DISCO DUCK a number one record, has got to have more than a few screws loose somewhere. People are becoming so mentally weak they need drugs and/or alcohol to get them through their lives. Individuality is dying; and prejudice (from what I've seen and heard) is as rampant as ever--people just aren't outwardly bigoted these days, they keep their true feelings a little more to themselves. But enough doom 'n' gloom.

By all means, keep the humor you've injected into AFTA.

--Frank W. Andrews, 883 Fremont Av., St.
Paul, MN 55106

("Yes, Frank, you may have it there. Mental weakness could be it. You know, studying psychic phenomenon, I have found that those people who are "hot" psychically don't use drugs or booze with any regularity. Also, many artists I respect shy away from it because they don't want any "clutter" in their minds. Could the trust you have in your own mental process be the indication whether you will get pleasure out of drugs and other opiates?? Hmm, verrry interesting." --Bill-Dale)

Your voice comes through clear, never sloppy, seldom silly. Without the death hoax your contributions to AFTA #1 would have been completely respectable. But without the death hoax, I realize, the title of your zine would not have the meaning you've given it; AFTA would lack a past, a background. Its silliness aside, the death hoax crosses the borders of taste--in several directions. For those reasons I think you could've, should've, found an alternate means to show how dissatisfied you'be become with fandom in its increasingly commercial state. Admittedly, you needed the death hoax, or something like it, to indicate the direction AFTA intends to take, but in my opinion you ought to have opted for something like it, something not as tasteless and more in keeping with the personality and less forced writing style evident everywhere else in AFTA #1. The only other spot where silliness moves to the fore is the tirade abou the uprightly boring seventies which, although it has its points, borders on the mawkish. Unlike the death hoax, however, it crosses no borders, and I think the exposition you chose suits the subject matter and am willing to bet its style was intentional.

After these large doses of criticism (easy to dish out) I may have alienated you completely. To rectify that possibility before it is too late, let me go on to compliment AFTA #1, with far fewer reservations. I enjoyed your fanzine reviews immensely, circling titles with wild abandon. For too long I've been looking the other way when the opportunity came to send for a fanzine with interesting contents. With summer approaching I intend to extend my long distance fannish contacts, and your succinct reviews provide excellent introductions, although you go a little easy on some fairly poor fanzines. I suppose that under that gruff exterior you're a marshmellow.

But, incontestably, your forte is the visual media: film and television. Your notes compare favorably with those published in Locus irregularly; in fact I believe you have more information on movies and TV shows with a fantasy or sf slant than Locus publishes. I must say, I prefer your media notes over almost any others I've seen. I feel the same way about your movie and television show reviews. The comparatively short movie reviews are text book examples of the art and outshine our local reviewer in the local paper's entertainment supplement, while the longer analyses of television shows could (dare I say it),be published in TV Guide. AFTA is one half comics zine and one half movie mag, and I suppose that tells us something about our visual generation.

Mark Burbey turns a more serious eye to the movies than you, and I'm not sure he meshes with the informal style you have established. But I think that a break from 96 pages of fun would be welcome by anyone, and that in a zine the size of AFTA a token serious person is necessary.
--Harry Bose, Rt. 2, Box 349, Albany, OR 97321

Dear Dale,

I could almost feel the dedication that went into its pages. The large assortment of articles and features were really surprising, especially considering this is your first fanzine.

I believe the reason you're having a hard time selling your first issue is because there has been too many bombs published in the past by fans who did not have the resources to make a good or even decent fanzine. What they lacked most of all was talent, and the willingness to sacrifice time and money into the endeavor. These fanzines, of which many fall into the crudzine categories give beginning fanzines a bad name. I myself have become weary of wasting my money on these types of zines, and have become much more cautious at what I buy. I'm sure most fans feel the same way and prefer the zines that have an established reputation or are highly recommended by these zines. In my own case, even tho I saw several ads for AFTA here and there, I still felt unsure about sending you any money, waiting mostly for some other fanzine to review you (RBCC,e tc.) or at least recommended you. It wasn't until I noticed the humorous little personal ads in the back of FCJ that I sent you money.

Fandom is being torn apart by the 'Overstreet' dealers and the increasing apathy of fans. Only through efforts of trufans, such as yourself and your contributors, will fandom survive. The continuing existence of fandom will rely on fanzines such as AFTA, and on that note, I would like to pledge my support to you (but I'll be damn if I'm sending you $50!)

But now onto more serious things. There was only one flaw in an otherwise perfect first issue. That flaw was you, Dale. It's obvious to me that you've got a very serious problem. Starting in your ads a couple of years ago in TBG up through most of your first issue you went out of your way to insult Bill, usually under guise of a dear and devoted brother. Now on page 27 you claim that Bill Marcinko does not even exist, that you and he are and always have been the same person! That type of humor offends me, Dale, and if you truly believe in what you wrote then you need help. After carefully rereading all your ads and AFTA #1, I have decided you are suffering from a severe mental disorder and should be declared mentally unfit to do little more than feed or dress yourself. This disorder is caused by your consuming hatred and jealousy that you have always felt towards your departed twin brother. How can you possibly erase his life and accomplishments completely from your memory and even say that you created him as a hoax? Have you so soon forgotten that he was married (Zelda, your sister-in-law) and had a son, Puggsley (your own nephew!) Dale, you need help, you should go immediately to a mental institution. See a psychiatrist, even a letter to Dear Abby would be to your advantage. You must seek help now! I even notice that you've gone so far as to incorporate his name into your own (Bill-Dale), this is a classic example of a duel personality (possibly schizophrenia) You should also note that you've put Bill's name before yours, a sure sign of a severe inferiority complex.
--Paul A. Flores, 3551 Victory Dr.#308-F,
Columbus, GA 31903

I am kind of ashamed to write you because a man like me dont take stock in things like that but my wife told me you were a man and not some dopey woman so I thought I would write to you. I am a cripple 41 yrs of age which I have been all my life and I have never let myself get blue until lately when I have been feeling lousy all the time on account of not getting anywhere and asking myself what is it all for. You have an education so I figured may be you no. What I want to no is why I go around pulling my leg up and down stairs reading meters for the gas company for a stinking $66.50 per while the bosses ride around in swell cars living off the fat of the land. Dont think I am a greasy red. I read where they shoot cripples in Russia because they cant work but I can work better than any park bum and support a wife and child to. But thats not what I am writing you about. What I want to no is what is it all for pulling my god damed leg along the streets and down in stinking cellar with it all the time hurting fit to burst so that near quitting time I am crazy with pain and when I go home all I hear is money

AFTA-SHOCKS (LETTERS) (continued)

money which aint no home for a man like me. What I want to no is what in hell is the use day after day with a foot like mine when you have to go around pulling and scrabling for a lousy three squares with a toothache that comes from useing the foot so much. The doctor told me I ought to rest it for six months but who will pay me when I am resting it. But that aint what I mean either because you might tell me to change my job and where could I get another one I am lucky to have one at all. It aint the job that I am complaining about but what I want to no is what is the whole stinking business for.

Please write me an answer not in the paper because my wife reads your stuff and I don't want her to no I wrote to you because I always say the papers is crap but I figured maybe you no smothing about it because you have read a lot of books and I never finished high.

Yours truly,
Peter Doyle

Congratulations for your excellent job on AFTA #1. It's very rare these days to get so many hours of enjoyment for so little money. As I have remarked to my friends, AFTA may very well become the SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW of comics fandom.

The highlights of the issue for me were your own accounts of Bill's demise (most notably the second car theory) and your WHY I LOVE AMERICA, which I suspect will end up as the best piece of fan writing for '78.

--Dave Franson, 6037 N. 62nd St.
#3, Milwaukee, WI 53218

About the article itself, one of the major weaknesses is that you never allow Bethke to respond. All that you did was to set up a straw man and proceed to knock him down (The language can be sexist) It would have been more interesting to allow Bethke equal time. But then were you interested in being fair?

("See Marilyn's letter of rebuttal in this issue. She is tired, and I doubt I could get any kind of response out of her." --Bill-Dale)

As to the article itself, I will point out only a few things which struck my eye.

1) What is needed is a definition of liberated. A good definition would be that a person is allowed to express himself to the fullest of his or her ability in all areas, to be what the existentialists call an authentic or complete person. What it does not mean is the intellectualization of any action as being liberated.

2) The first thing to really strike me was the statement "I am happily married to... a man who has no objection..." this is an unusual statement for a liberated person but it is nice to know that she has her husband's permission. This does not seem very liberated, does it? As to her defense of what she does, I ha heard the same pseudo intellectual justification for PLAYBOY. As to the sex, it would seem that she is as much an adolescent wet dream as an inverted Gor novel. To try to elevate it to some intellectual plane is absurd.

She describes herself as an exhibitionist. An exhibitionist is a person who acts out in one area because they are insecure in other areas. Therefore she uses her body to make up for what she must feel are shortcomings in other areas. This does not seem like a liberated or authentic person.

So what Wendy Pini presents is a bit of intellectual fluff to try to justify what she does, which is to appeal to an adolescent sexuality. I will not continue this. If she is paid for exposing her body then she is prostituting herself just as surely as any PLAYBOY centerfold. I have no disagreement with what she is doing, only with how she tries to justify herself. There was a case in Richmond lately of a young woman in court on a morals charge (prostitution) who used almost the same argument except that she didn't have her husband's permission.

Enough of this. I would really suggest that you give Jessie Salmonson or Joanna

DELAROSA/
ORDWAY '78

AFTA-SHOCKS (LETTERS) (continued)

Russ or Jennifer Bankier or Avedon Carol an opportunity to respond. They would be far more qualified than I to give a response.
--Wayne Hooks, 2200 Chalfont Drive #28,
Richmond, VA 23224

Dear Professor Marcinko,

Greetings! Congratulations! Apologies! You must have thought I had forgotten but, see, you were wrong once again! I really could not write you a note until AFTA I had labored through most of the small print. I gave it to myself as a penitential exercise for Lent this year instead of giving up alcohol and tobacco, etc. Maybe I was hallucinating the back cover I thought I saw the Resurrection! I just couldn't figure out though how Christ standing immovable and impassible should have a bull by the ear--and then me thought--well there's a lot of bull here anyhow and it all seemed to hang together like a sow's ear. The artwork is illuminating--if not stimulating. May I suggest you have the whole thing put in Braille for the Blind next time? Or print a 1/4 size smaller. I kept losing my place until finally I decided to have my brightest remedial reading kids read it to me and tell me what it all really meant. They complained it was too light on sex to get by the Legion of Decency. Miss Abda is not sure that incest is really a solution to the decaying family situation but she thinks it might indeed help. Anything would in my view.

Seriously, with the sinking level of TV I think bright young men who can read like yourself should be able to improve the quality of Sha-Na-Na or The Captain and Tenille with benefit to the Nation at Large. Why don't you try a television script along the lines of an American Monty Python? There should be a living in it.
--Dermot Kavanagh, MacKinnon School, Wharton,
NJ 07885

("Dermot is an eighth grade teacher of mine, probably the only person in that other generation that I like aside from my parents and possibly an aunt or two. You hear that, ABC, NBC, CBS, even UBS, you've got a hot recommendation from SOMEONE WHO KNOWS. Your writer for a major comedy series is right here. Hell, even PBS? My number's in the book." --Bill-Dale)

It's funny but just from reading AFTA I feel like you are an old friend of mine. Your delightful personality really comes across on paper. I can't say as much for your sense of humor though. You're like a favorite uncle walking around with his fly open. Nobody has the heart to tell you its open. Your real inner self which is warm, perceptive, intelligent and kind comes across in your reviews of HEROES, SATURDAY NIGHT FEVER, and LOOKING FOR MR. GOODBAR but that atrocious and unoriginal "dead person" stuff is not for you. It's like making Queen Elizabeth sit on a whoopee cushion. You're also a sexy little devil too. Horny is more like it (ha, ha)
--Steve Komeshok, 51C Marion Pepe Drive,
Lodi, NJ 07644

("Hmmmm... which is the real Bill Dale Marcinko, slobbering sentimentalist or bitter satirist/nihilist? What do the rest of you think. Death jokes out of character for S.O.B. (Silly Old Bill)? About AFTA, I couldn't put it down (no fair putting glue on the pages)
--Mark Maksimik, 1045 Brighton St., Union,
NJ (Mark is a fellow RUtgers comic fan)

Keep calm--the men in the white coats are on their way, and they'll take you to a nice little place where you can do work on Ken Kesey's sequel to ONE FLEW OVER THE CUCKOO'S NEST...I had read a lot of reviews of AFTA (Well, two, anyway) so I kind of expected it to be a bit gonzo. Which turned out to be like saying the Hulk is a tad on the strong side. But praise to the Dread Dormammu, it wasn't pompous, it was funny, it was fannish (in the complimentary sense of the term) and very engaging.

Loved the little murder-resurrection of you Bill half, the entire death hoax. Loved the Anita Bryant Easter message, the religious comic reprint with the "Kill A Fag For Christ", and even the Jewburgers reference. As you can see, I get off on sick humor. Those parts I loved.

I very much liked the Perez interview, and even though the comics reviews were a little dated, my time, they were highly interesting, especially those by Ed Via, one of the few people who gets more letters printed than I do (I keep telling myself, not very convincingly, that quality makes up for quantity.) Some of the other review I didn't particularly agree with--Warlord despite nice art, for instance, I just cannot believe, Iknow too much science to believe in a hollow earth these days. It was okay in ERB's time, perhaps, but these days? I know that's silly--to be able to enjoy a Superman and not a hollow earth--but I can't, and that's all there is to it.

Loved the obligatory Jack Kirby interview. Being a sucker, I actually turned the page, looking for the rest of the interview, before I realized...

Very much liked the Yellowjacket one-pager. A clever idea that'll never be shown in the comics (maybe-- who would've believed a comic about Conan fifteen years ago?)

I dutifully read the Red Sonja show-controversy, but it seemed very much a tempest in a teapot. I do think Red Sonja tends to be a shade too much a sexist fantasy in her armoured g-string, but her independence might make up for it in terms of feminist values--me, I dunno. Personally, I think the original red-haired "female Conan", Jirel of Joiry by C.L. Moore, is a lot more interesting, but that's a personal taste.

Suggestions for future issues? Keep up the wackiness, the reader hoaxes, and all that. Keep the reviews, but also have columns devoted to suggestions--instead of tearing down an issue completely, ask you reviewers to think out what changes in a particular mag will make it more appealing. I would like at least one fan-hero feature, art and story--a new and original super-hero.

I hear Fred Hembeck will be contributing in future issues. Now THAT I like. He's great and one of the best and most entertaining comics commentators around.
--Al Schroeder III, 2207 Old Hickory Blvd.,
Nashville, TN 37215

("My only regret is that Fred only did a few illos for me, and not a full-page or newspaper sized commentary like he does for TBG and TCR. Heck, even if he'd want to write something. I remember seeing his letters in Marvel comics."
--Bill-Dale)

-SHOCKS (LETTERS) (continued)

Bill Dale,
TA arrived today.
u'ré very strange.
nnis Mallonee, 4085 Nobel Dr. #3,
n Diego, CA 92122

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brief response to AFTA: Strange, absorbing. Basically appealing mix- e of slyness and candor. The scram- ng, uncensored prose has benefits to sure--and is ideologically subversive. you know Meltzer's work?) (It's a kind tutored, crafty sloppiness of discourse-- aggressive, less friendly, less ve (?) than yours.) Glad to have your erage of films--comics as a system production resemble movies, and their te of maximized events and characters vide similar pleasures. Can't say, ugh, that your taste in movies is any gratifying--or that your avuncular olies and recommendations (well-inten- ned as they are) carry much weight. ur sense of history does not seem to ther back than the 50's) The enthu- sm of AFTA, though, is precious--the th in language, etc., and the crammed, erious quality seems quite appropriate. t butting-in you're fond of can be oying, but I guess it contributes to emergence of a person in the work. AFTA is quite an achievement in se conglomerate times.

ack Shadoian, RFD #3, Amherst, MA 01002

es, my sense of history doesn't go back farther than the 50's, basically because I don't, and I have a tendency not to trust anything that is reported to me in history books. Life, as I can recall it, began for me in 1963, when I started recording images with some degree of clarity. Everything else has no meaning." --Bill-Dale)

Caught a copy of AFTA while up at the rvel offices last week. I read one of ur pages where you attempted to define ndom (in a most opinionated way), and 'm afraid you did not act in the best raditions of unbiased journalism.

Getting to the point, though, I was specially dismayed at being found ynonymous with "a Mitchell Mehdy." nyone who knows me to any degree at all ould tell you that your definition of Warren Storob was the diametric opposite f the one you had.

A Warren Storob, more accurately, would e the following;

A person who, at age 15, resolved to edicate his career to writing and drawing or Marvel, and used collecting as an ducational tool for creativity.

A person who shared his collections ith all interested parties, young and ld, usually within his residence.

A person who ran two highly successful ree displays at Brooklyn College; probably he most comprehensive Marvel displays ver done.

A person who taught a free experimental ourse at Marvel Comics at Brooklyn College.

A person who vigorously fought against he fraudulent practices and unfair anipulations that dealers (and Overpriced Street Guides) perpetuated on unknowing fans; hen got kicked in the teeth for it by the same unknowing fans, etc.

A person solidly dedicated to perpetuating the fine, mature precedents set by Lee and Marvel in the 1960's, who hardly ever had access to the pros.

A person who majored in art and creative writing, in order to hone the skills he would need to crack into the industry, and give fans everywhere the BEST he could.

A person who, while minoring in education, taught remedial reading in a supposedly dangerous ghetto school; who, when unsuccessful with dull primers, copped student interest and good results with (among other mags), a valuable Fantastic Four #1.

A person who showed such a good rapport with so-called "problem students", that he was given his own little office in the guidance department of Gershwin Junior High.

A person who became involved in publicity making media, not through his glory seeking, but through the discovery made by a classy, talented, long, lea~~n~~and pretty reporter for a Brooklyn College paper, who, though not a comics person on any level, spent many entranced hours preparing a full page feature on his "career."

A person who was denied any but the most menial opportunities at Marvel's offices, because he represented a threat to the security of apathetic editors and writers. ("Does anyone want to hear more of this hype? As I thought. End of letter." --B.D.)

--Warren R. Storob, 2270 Plumb 1st Street,
Brooklyn, NY 11229

("I'm glad you wrote me, Warren. I think that you have gotten a bad name in fandom, perhaps even unjustly. BUt I think that after this excerpt here, (the letter actually ran 3 pages) everyone who reads AFTA will get a very good idea of precisely what kind of person you are." --Bill-Dale)

Your treatment of the Wizard and Sonja Show in AFTA was done with splendid understanding. Thanks for the coverage. The whole thing came off very well.

Is it true that your twin brother has an outer belly button while YOU, in fact, have an INNER?

You write well, Bill Dale. You have just the right measure of tooth and sauce. Loved WHY I LOVE AMERICA.

Barth Gimble Forever!

--Frank Thorne, 1967 Grenville Road,
Scotch Plains, NJ 07076

It is am ambitious attempt, perhaps too much so. Putting out a fanzine is hard enough, a quality one even harder, but to attempt a double issue...on the very first issue...

Well, it was a noble attempt. Perhaps it would have been better to have started off a little more modestly; at least you would not be so much in debt now. And a more modest attempt probably could have been carried off much more successfully. Not that this one was bad. There is some good stuff in there.

Your "A Fan Primer" was hilarious. One of the funniest pieces I have seen in or out of fandom in a good while. Your run down of fanzines et al was one of the most complete ones I have ever seen, and apparently fairly objective. Your movie reviews show an intelligent, aware person (unless your review of Annie Hall was a rip off of another writer, which I doubt.) And obviously the death hoax shows a good imagination.

On the negative side, the layout was terribly cluttered; understandable, I suppose,

AFTA-SHOCKS (LETTERS) (continued)

trying to get as much as possible in as small a space as possible, but still...

Also, I wonder if the whole "death hoax" hasn't gone far enough. I kind of got a kick out of it a long time ago, when you first brought it out in the ads of TBG (which I have dropped, by the way.) And I suppose the dual personality bit is kind of fun: the Dick Geis/Alter Ego battle is almost always entertaining, as well as often being educational. But seems to me like Geis (Alter?) has his act together really well. Like any joke, however, might it not be carried too far? In my mind, an argument could be made for both sides.

I am not going to comment on your other contributors; they are competent, it seems, but kind of lackluster, nothing that different. (For example: I thought the "Truth About Fans" by Jim Hogan was kind of simplistic, even if written for neos.)

Again, on the positive side, it seems that you are trying for a "fun" fanzine, what they used to call a "fannish" type zine, thus the marginal notes and so on. And in this I supposed you have succeed: congratulations. And it is a good direction, I think. But I also think , perhaps, you would have been better off with a mimeo zine.

A person ordering the zine expecting a "slick" or even a "semi-pro" zine will no doubt be disappointed vecause that is apparently not the goals you are aiming for; yet a person looking for a fannish zine would hardly look for it in offset, would they?

Of course, you have been in fandom a lot longer than I have, so I don't intend to give advice. I have never gotten up the courage to pub my own zine, so really have no right to say a whole lot.

--Frank Watson, 204 Crane, Dexter, MO 63841

What are the critics saying about AFTA #1

"It's a credit to your genius...master."

"...A triumph of your will..."

"It's okay!"

"Okay?!! I think we can do better than that!"

Well, you did do better than that, Bill Dale old boy. I loved AFTA #1. No...I lurved it (Sorry, Woody). AFTA is funny. It's got class. It's informative. It tastes good. I ate mine.

I liked AFTA not only because of its content, but also because of the idea behind it--to do a fan's fanzine. And you've succeeded. There was something in it for everyone...except maybe collectors of Peruvian volcano explosion films, but I intend to remedy that with an upcoming article "Lava in the Cinema" and its sequel, "Fun Things to do with Pumice in 8mm."

AFTA made me feel good about fandom once more, something I thought impossible. I really would like to contribute to it because I think it's one of the few worthy causes left in comics fandom.

Just from reading your articles and reviews, I feel a certain kinship, the same feeling I get from reading Fred Henbeck's cartoons. It's about time for a coalition of artists and writers to storm an often deadly serious fandom with humor!

I'll support AFTA any way I can. And I have told everyone I know about it. Mom says she might buy a copy.

Really, I'm with you all the way! Tippecanoe and Tyler, too! Fifty-four Forty or fight! Better dead than Red! In brightest day, in blackest night!...

I think you should continue AFTA in the same style as the first issue.

Your loyal supporter (no puns, pl

--Mike Prince, 311 Malibu Dr., Little Rock, AR 72205

("Gosh, thanks, Mike. Well, this is the end of the letters column for this issu, I hear you out there saying "Thank God." It did get a tad long. But I can't help it. You wrote long letters. I had inte to make some general comments, but I thi that all the different criticisms and observations that I received were someho reflected in the batch I printed. Let m say this, though, if you have written a LOC or letter recently (this could mean a month, or a day) I WILL GET BACK TO YO if not with a letter in this copy, then under separate cover. Promise. I AM however, holding all the art, just in case AFTA #2 has to go into a second printing. And speaking about the future of AFTA, I mind as well use this space to give you the lowdown. Just letme step out of this parenthesis,)and, now the, arrggh, quotation marks", there.

THE FUTURE: IS THERE ONE

No sob stories this time around. No long drawn out pleas for mercy. When the final figures are in, I will have spent close to $2,000 on this issue, printing, mailing, advertising, and stamps to write to all of you. Part of this is due to the wonderful postal system who raised their rates a few days before this issue came out (it costs 48¢ fourth class or 60¢ third class to mail this issue, first class is $1.32, almost as much as the issue itself).

I don't have a job. I go to college full time. I am slowly running out of ideas to get money, in fact, even ideas to borrow money.

I think the only way AFTA can continue will be with loyal subbers. With subbers you see, I don't have to advertise EVERY ISSUE to tell everyone it's out. Most of the money I lose goes to ads, postage, and flyers. If you subscrib and get your friends to subscribe, we wil have a fighting chance.

I am determined that a fannish fanzin succeed. I am trying to prove that peopl can be human and funny and just get together a few months apart and bull shi paper. Of course, it is uncommercial.

This is sort of a double issue double. Although I said the first ish was a doubl issue at 96 pages, I am planning regular issues to be 96 pages now (or 48 pages 8½ x 11--let me know how you would feel about the change to an 8½ x 11 format). This is a double issue if you compare it to future issues, a quad issue if compar to past ones. Just thinking about it, realize it is a crazy idea, the last act a desperate man perhaps. Am I making se

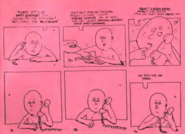
Next issue will be out in November. I' asking if you order single copies at $1.5 each, you add 50¢ for postage. You can I'm pushing the subscription path. So h

If you quote dealer's rates to booksto the cost of AFTA issues are $1.00 wholesal with a minimum order of 10 copies.

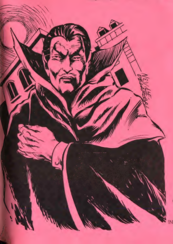
The sub rates are as follows:

#1-5 - $6.00
#2-5 - $5.00
#3-5 - $4.00

Single issues (#1 and #2 are still very available) are $1.50 each, plus 50¢ for po


THATS IT! I'VE HAD ENOUGH! I'M GOING TO THE TOPMAN! YES SIRE, THE TOPMAN!
GET OUT THE OL' YELLOW PAGES LESSEE... FAKIRS GURUS ... WE GO UNDER BENIGN LEADERSHIP AND GUIDANCE
GOD?! LISSEN HERE, MAC! I'VE GOTTA FEW ... OKAY
HE PUT ME ON HOLD

douglas bryson This is (c) 1977 douglas bryson



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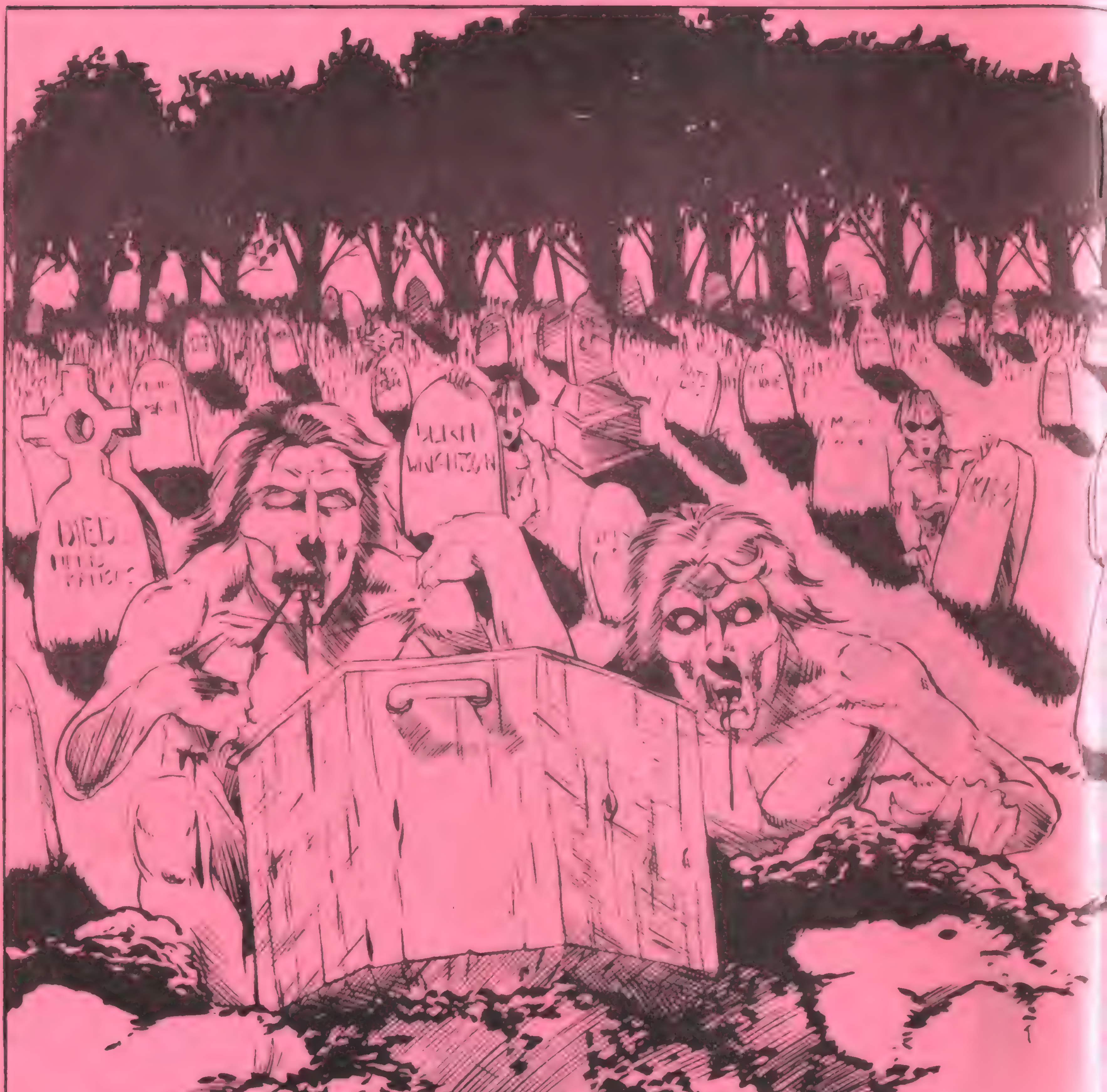
DIED
O'CONNELL '78 4/16

AFTA, TOO

CHAYKIN
& HAZLEWOOD

PART TWO
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Time runs like a fuse
And the fuse is
burning."
--Jackson Browne

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Back cover by Mac Patterson. (Plus 10 episodes of Luke Warm, Private Eye, by Dave Burd)

"Eternal nothingness is ok, if you're dressed for it."
--Woody Allen

AFTA had to present...

The Bill-Dale Marcinko Interview

AFTA: Did you always want to be a comic book artist?

BILL: Am I at the right interview?

AFTA: I'm sorry, my fault. Lesse, comic artist, comics writer, er, just wait, it's here somewhere...

BILL: Can I go to the bathroom while you're looking for it?

AFTA: Here! Fanzine editor or BNF. May I begin?

BILL: I'm not answering any questions about sleeping in the nude...

AFTA: Why did you publish AFTA?

BILL: Well, I wanted a fanzine that you could really get your fist into, heavy like a good two, three handfuls of sand...

AFTA: Sand?

BILL: The kind of fanzine you could use as a doorstop, for the really bad issues... I wanted a fanzine with lots and lots of different rubbish, articles and sections like little fanzines unto themselves...

AFTA: That makes for a very disjointed appearance. Is there any unifying theme for AFTA?

BILL: Not really, a few unspoken ones, perhaps: That the writers write as if they were talking to someone on the phone or at a con, really informal, direct, and that they say something that speaks to people, something that will stick in their mind's for at least three, four days...

AFTA: Are you "on" anything?

BILL: Not now.

AFTA: Those rules leave the field wide open for subject matter...

BILL: I guess so. But that's ok, 'cause then AFTA can change, as I change, as fandom changes-- I want AFTA to really reflect what's happening, not just in fandom, but in the so-called "real" world,and I guess, in my *life*. AFTA is still a lump of clay, it can go in all different directions, take all kinds of forms...

AFTA: Did you ever have skin problems when you were young?

BILL: No, I had leprosy.

AFTA: You *do* write a lot of AFTA yourself, by *your* own choice. You seem to want to get involved in everyone's article...

("Like this?"-- Bill-Dale)
Right.

BILL: I think of myself as a sort of emcee and head writer, aside from the usual duties of being an editor-- stapling, collating, and all that... Hell, I don't mind. Just as long as no one else does...

AFTA: You include a lot of social commentary and satire in AFTA that is out of place in a fanzine on comics and films...

BILL: Is that bad? How can anyone really discuss media and the effect on society, if you don't discuss society? What *are* trends in comics and media but stylized reflections of what is going on between groups, and in personal circles?

AFTA: You seem to encourage involvement and controversy, to the point of sensationalism?

BILL: I don't think it goes that far, but I don't think I should shy away from religion, sex, and politics, which are usually "no-no" subjects in fanzines.

AFTA: Isn't anything sacred to you?

BILL: Children, small dogs, the outdoors, music-- they are sacred.

AFTA: But don't you think "KILL A FAG FOR CHRIST" is going a little too far? Overstepping the bounds of good taste?

BILL: Look, I am Christian in attitude (if not in practice), I am old-fashioned when it comes to sex. I am apolitical, I don't smoke or drink, and I would be never caught forcing a certain way of life on anyone. I think the comments and criticisms I make are valid. Perhaps I am not as subtle as some folks would like it. A lot of people got upset over death jokes, and that was just silly stuff... it wasn't threatening at all. The most disturbing thing I printed in AFTA was WHY I LOVE AMERICA, and that garnered the most positive enthusiasm. Fans are not stupid, they don't deserve to be talked down to. If someone finds AFTA offensive, too satirical, let them come to me, and I'll put them in for 6 issues of ARCHIE AND JUGHEAD instead.

AFTA: As a child, what did you want to be when you grew up?

BILL: An enigma.

AFTA: How is AFTA doing sales-wise and dollar-wise?

BILL: Piss poor, to be frank. I don't want to complain, I don't want to go into this la-te-da like I usually do on how much money I have to shell out to print it and mail it, and how I MUST have more orders and subs to survive. No one wants depressing figures thrown at

BILL: them. If someone wants to know how much I'm putting out, they can go to a printer, go to the post office, check out the latest prices on raisins. What I charge and what I will continue to charge will be well under the break even point. If anyone cares, I'm in this for another reason. For love. For idealism. To perhaps make it possible for others like me, who want to do something like AFTA. If no one supports it, and I put out 3 or 4 issues, which I think I have to do to give AFTA a real chance, then I'm stopping the machinery dead in its tracks, refunding everyones money, and getting out of fandom for good. In a way, I want AFTA to represent all that is good about this crazy society of fandom, the joy, the surprise, the friendliness, and love. If it ain't there, if it don't make it...I'm off. Ten years in fandom's enough. I'll just go to college, become a psychologist like I want to, and the rest of the time make films.

AFTA: Are you serious?

BILL: Sure. If people want to help AFTA out, they will. That's where my head is at. I think everyone now knows about AFTA-- knows what I'm shooting for. If they want to help me out, if they are working for the same things in life, I'll know. If it don't work, then it's probably a stupid idea. The idea seemed really super last time this year.

AFTA: What idea? What is the idea behind AFTA?

BILL: AFTA, is on the surface, a simple review magazine, a little magazine of Popular Culture. I want it, however to be something else, maybe to make people think , to make them care, maybe to reach out across the depersonalization and loneliness of life and touch something. I want it however, to be fun to read. People have lost the ability to have fun. I would like it to think it may become the forerunner of a new kind of magazine, of fanzines produced NOT FOR PROFIT, but for communication and love. Does that sound silly?

AFTA: Not at all. Go ahead.

BILL: I guess that's what the title's all about... ASCENSION FROM THE ASHES. The symbol of the phoenix, rising from its ashes, after lying dormant in a sleep of death, for a long, long, time. AFTA, rising from the ashes of commercialism and hollow magazines like PEOPLE and US, and ushering in a new era of thinking. It does sound silly. Ask me something else.

AFTA: Okay, do you believe, as some have claimed recently, that this is a land of pervasive ugliness...

BILL: Yes.

AFTA: Has AFTA's success gone to your head?

BILL: Of course, why else would I be printing an interview with myself?

AFTA: Of course.

BILL: Seriously, I don't know what you mean by success-- if you mean economic success, no way, pal, wrong universe-- if you mean being well known, like being recognized at conventions, no. No one asks me for interviews, you can see, no one will print them except me. I'm a small time hack. I have a few kind people saying something about AFTA which makes me feel very good-- maybe that's the only kind of success I want, just simple acknowledgement.

AFTA: But wouldn't you like to be recognized at conventions?

BILL: Not the kind of recognition I've been getting. The last con I went to (and I mean that this may be the LAST con) was Creation this August, and I got threatened to stop publishing AFTA, I suspect, by the same people who beat me up in July.

AFTA: Beat you up?

BILL: I don't want to talk about it now. About ego-boo, yeah, I like it, sure, everyone does. But this kind of $2,000 ego-boo I could do without. I want AFTA to succeed as AFTA, with or without Bill-Dale Marcinko, and to be appreciated for what happens these pages every two months, although I don't know if I can remove Bill-Dale Marcinko from it. Success? I consciously rebel against success. I don't want to become a large zine, so large it becomes pap, the kind of pap that I had to put up with these days. I hate "successful" things, I guess (I didn't want to see the EXORCIST for years because of the hype it was getting). I hate hype. And money, in terms of AFTA being in the black, means little to me. I would like to pay the printer, though.

AFTA: Then you are on some kind of idealistic power trip?

BILL: Idealistic power trip? More clever witticisms to impress me with what a good interviewer you are? AFTA is an idealistic crusade for me. Perhaps its a personal question mark, a wondering if whether these past 10 years have been meaningful to me. If my ideas have been worth it. When I ask myself what AFTA is, how it should be merchandized, I always never know. I just want to work like a God-damn son-of-a-bitch to make it. I don't believe in "big" government, "big" economics, "big" publishing ventures, "big" publishing conglomerates. Glommies, I call them. They work against all those things of being human which I value-- unpredictabilit spontaneity, laughter, and fun.

AFTA: "Glommies?"

BILL: Yeah, an amorphous horror from outer space. Bug-eyed monsters and conglomerates. BEMs and GLOMMIES. The fault of most magazines today is that they try to be slick, try to be commercial. I have a cover by Jack Kirby this issue, you don't see me making a big fuss about it? Who cares? Jack Kirby, maybe. Fanzines are inaccessible and, goddamn it, they don't *have* to be. They are impersonal. Why? AFTA is a prototype of those things I remember in my past. I guess AFTA *is* my last 60's crusade (or I'll be optimistic and say, my *first* 80's crusade, how about that?) What am I trying to prove? That a personal, friendly zine can make it. Take a look at ROLLING STONE, the VILLAGE VOICE, the BERKELEY BARB, any of them, they have become slick and commercial, but worst of all BORING. All these great, vital organs of communication of the 60's are now as vacuous, as PEOPLE magazine. I guess I want AFTA to be whatever ROLLING STONE was in 1967. Touching people on some other levels than cheap entertainment.

AFTA: But that was 1967, Bill. This is 1978. The 60's are over. They have been for a long time. You can't expect people to understand, you can't get the fires burning again. There's no common unity, nothing to fight.

BILL: What about the apathy which causes you to make that statement? What about people who are letting money, government, and business control their lives? THAT is a greater danger than Vietnam. AT LEAST VIETNAM WAS A TANGIBLE HORROR. I want to return control of the world to living, caring human beings. I want a world where people can love, a world of justice, and beauty, and most of all fun.

AFTA: And you're determined to do it alone if you have to.

BILL: Yes, if it comes to that.

AFTA: You are an idealist, a particularly crazy one...

BILL: Never once did I deny that. But are we all not idealists? We get all the idealism punched out of us by listening to the people who say, "no you don't want to be a movie star, you'll never make it, be a civil engineer, at least you'll get a job" What happens? We end up GROWN UP, which is just a synonym in my book for one who "no longer dreams." If this is a simplistic or childish notion of the world, then so be it.

AFTA: But some people just want escape. They don't want to hear how bad the world is...

BILL: Fine, fine. Then they can get used to living in mountain of shit. They better not complain to me, though, or I'll let them know how I feel. I'm not that self-righteous. If someone asks me what my goal in life is, I will tell them "to have fun" and pinch their cheeks (Bill does not, of course, reveal *which* cheeks)

BILL: What is an idealist, but someone with a vision of a better world. I choose honesty over deceit, laughter over solemnity, spontaneity over rigidity, creativity over destruction-- am I that different? Aren't we all idealists? I get frustrated when I see people sitting back and taking second rate treatment. Of people telling us how we can have fun and not. Look after all that protesting and fighting we did in the 60's, what was our gift, our reward? WATERGATE. THE RECESSION. INFLATION, SHORTAGES, MORE WAR. AN economic "fuck you!" When I look at what was said, what we did in the 60's, when I see how far we've back-slid, I find myself shouting over little things. I find myself crystallized stronger than ever before, more worried, more feverish. I won't get better. I hope not, at least. I guess I'm supposed to grow out of this like all the hippies did, and become an accountant or a civil servant, and forget all that I said.

AFTA: How old *are* you?

BILL: 68.

AFTA: No jokes, be serious.

BILL: Too old. God, the time I've wasted. My birthday is May 24th, the same day as Bob Dylan's. Us Geminis, he doing concerts for $2 million, and me going into debt over AFTA. God, how far we've come.

AFTA: You knew Bob Dylan?

BILL: We all did. Now...

AFTA: But you're back at college. Why?

BILL: You want to know? I'm going to be a psychologist, sell out to the system, and spend my days listening to neurotic housewives for $50 an hour.

AFTA: What about before? You have made oblique references to Vietnam, to drugs, to many charges of private pain locked up inside somewhere...

BILL: If you want to know whether I fought in Vietnam, no, I haven't had that pleasure.

AFTA: What about drugs?

BILL: I don't talk about pain. Before we muddle through the rest of the interview, I'll give you the basic facts. I was born William Dale Marcinko, I don't like William 'cause it's too formal and reminds me of a king, which I aint--My last name is pronounced "Marr / Sink' / Oh" not "Marr / Chink' /Oh". I am 5' 8", I weigh 160 lbs, I wear glasses, I have light brown/blonde hair, and I'm told I bear a striking resemblance to Warren Zevon. You can ask me about my childhood, up to the point where it ceases to be fun, at about 12. Don't ask me about anytime since. You can ask me my opinion on things. I will talk freely about my last two years at college, they are for the most part, pleasant memories. I don't know much about the future. I am an English major and Psychology minor, I will go on I hope to become a qualified and practicing psychologist. I would love to write or work on films, and I'd drop anything else to do that if I

BILL: get the chance to. My most interesting attribute is that, after getting beat up for AFTA, I'm a bit paranoid...

AFTA: About what?

BILL: The CIA. The FBI. I've signed too many petitions, you see. There's this rule in America, if a person is too vocal in his life and tries to help out faggots, criminals, war veterans, and political prisoners in other countries, you become a threat to THEM. Odd, ain't it? They open your mail.

AFTA: You are paranoid. Since you don't want to talk about it, I won't ask you where you picked up this, er, social consciousness of yours...

BILL: At a store, twat. I bought it at a store.

AFTA: You seem to be very out of place in the seventies, with shopping malls and discos and all that. If you weren't living now, what would you be, huh?

BILL: Dead.

AFTA: What do you think it takes to be happy?

BILL: Knowing what the ideal person you want to be is like, and pursuing it like a demon. Or a large surplus of drugs.

AFTA: I thought you weren't going to talk about drugs.

BILL: I'm joking about it, there's a difference.

AFTA: What are your opinions on drugs? (See I did phrase it right...)

BILL: I go into this later. Lesse... I wouldnt send someone to prison for it. I'm all for NORML, I think people should grow pot in their backyard, instead of putting the traffic in the hands of organized crime and criminals of all sorts. I'm for the right to destroy brain cells in creative fashions. I wouldn't consider it a positive attribute for friends. I have been in that culture, and I think it's mostly overinflated silliness of some order. If someone considered it as a regular thing, I'd worry. If I had one of my friends come up to me and say he "enjoys me more when we're high together" or he "can only have a good time if theres pot around" I'd have to reevaluate the friendship some. I don't need drugs to "find"myself. I like to be in the drivers seat. As corny as it sounds, I get high on life. People who smoke, and drink for that matter (booze is a much worse drug physiologically speaking, than pot, or coke) are, if nothing worse, terribly unimaginative.

AFTA: Now, a hard question. If I'm out of line, just tell me. You have spoken out on gay rights in AFTA, in letters to friends. I think the one question all those leering fans out there have for you now, is, er, you know...

BILL: Well... what is it?

AFTA: Ok, it's just that... I feel I'm prying into your personal life, the intimate details of your life...

BILL: Ask, it's alright.

AFTA: Are you, uhhhhh, you know, uhhhhh...

BILL: Enough beating around the bush. Isn't it obvious, with the stand on Anita and all. I'm not ashamed. Yes,

AFTA: You are?!?!?!?!!!!!!?!??????????

BILL: Yes, I am a humanitarian.

AFTA: What's wrong with todays America?

BILL: People aren't driven.

AFTA: Did you ever have like a piece of food stuck way back in one of your teeth, and it just sits there for days and days, and then, like, you just sort of find it...

BILL: Hey, c'mon, get outta here...

AFTA: Do you sleep in the nude?

BILL: Heck, no. You could injure yoursel

AFTA: Are you "for real?"

BILL: Probably not.

AFTA: What about comics today?

BILL: It's got a long way to go to join the ranks of "art" the way film is an art. It's got a long way to go to capture an older audience tha high school. Why the companies don't start packaging and advertisi their products to a more sophistica audience, like Heavy Metal... The staff at Marvel and DC, gee, you ge stuck with hacks who are in it for the money, dreadfully inexperienced fans who know little about storytelling, like Milgrom, the fans, li Levitz, who are in it because its a comics fan sex fantasy-- retelling old plots, staying within the same sensibility of writing, hacks like Conway, then that group of people like Adams and Wrightson, who dip into comics and go on to "bigger and better things", suck the blood out of their fans by selling $50 art portfolios, thinking they are something special. Don't they realize, that by the "grace of fans go I"-- Gee, stuck-up English egotists like Barry Smith. Barry's calling himself Barry-Windsor Smit now. I saw a flyer with it. He is now "Windsor-Smith" Ouuuuuooh, ooo aren't we posh, squire, no more buttered scones for me, I'm off to play the grand piano... Plain old Smith not good enough for the limey.

AFTA: You better stop or you'll get sued.

BILL: So?

AFTA: So how are you feeling?

BILL: How-are-you-I'm-fine-I-am-asking-you-how-you-feel-but-I-reallydont give-a-damn litany again, wot?

AFTA: I really mean it...

THE BILL-DALE MARCINKO INTERVIEW (continued)

BILL: Well, I'm a bit depressed. Because of AFTA, yeah, but that comes later when the bills start pouring in. I just said good bye to my roommates at college this year, these scenes always break me up. I cry at movies, what can you do with me? It is just rough saying goodbye, and knowing it won't be the same again. I guess I'm at the time in my life where I start thinking 'bout my friends as real FRIENDS. In second or third grade, I never got this broken up. All the times we had in that room this year, now we split up. I just can't put it behind me as if it didn't matter. I'm a sentimental fool, okay, but I'm the kind of person who once I have a friend, you're a friend for life. When you say goodbye on that last day, you always go through this number about how you are gonna keepin touch and stay together above all else, because that's the IMPORTANT THING. I guess you know in your mind, that that's bull, but it's nice bull. It may be lies, but when you consent to them for a few minutes, and it is nice. Maybe I'm not as cynical as I pretend to be. Maybe this time I didn't want it to be bull. Just one time, just one time I would have liked something to work out the way it should. People are elusive with their feelings. Always trying to pretend they are so strong.

AFTA: Courage? Male courage?

BILL: The human heritage. I wish people would learn to put more credence in the tiny special things, the promises. I wish for once they'd have the courage to be honest, instead of the courage to be a man and bear up tight against things like a rock. Picture this: I am sitting and talking with my roommate, or even a friend, up until 3 or 4 in the morning. The character of those discussions are remarkably quite different and quite unique next to anything else in life, anywhere, 'cept maybe like in the Army, too. There are nighttime thoughts, hopes, dreams, plans; then there are daytime ones. Why is it, that the nighttime dreams go away so swiftly. Why is it that they are underplayed, and the more LOGICAL character of life takes over?

I don't understand why people pack tight their emotions inside of them, when you can share them with other people, which is much more fun than getting ulcers. People should let their hair down more, in this respect. I've met people, and bopped around in trivial conversation for too long. Why don't people just say what they feel?

I think loneliness is a lot more common than people pretend. I think at times that loneliness, not evil, is at the root of all negative acts. If people would just go up to each other, and say, I'm lonely, let's spend some time together. Or I feel this way, I have this idea, let's share it. People make up for their loneliness with silly manipulative games, pretending they are a MAN or an INDEPENDENT WOMAN. They cover it up with a big ego, by being obnoxious and unapproachable, or by achieving some kind of power, playing with it like a lollipop. If you could just admit your feelings, I think it'd work out okay.

AFTA: Then Freud was right, anxiety is at the root of all our problems.

BILL: Perhaps, although that is a simplistic viewpoint.

AFTA: How does one survive, then?

BILL: By just being yourself.

BY doing the one thing which requires the most courage and love, but which, actually is the most natural and free state of existence there is.

AFTA: What do you mean?

BILL: Hmmmm... I guess by cherishing things like imagination, creativity, and spontaneity. BY beginning again with your mind. Pretending that this is your last day on earth, and you've got to stuff images, humor, warmth, humility, and just plain god-damned fun and zip into your path like mad. Jamming it all into your brain, faster and faster. It is hard, of course. Right now, this interview being the thing conducted last in AFTA, I'm very close to a nervous breakdown. I typed all 200 pages from 300 or 400 pages of copy, and I wrote a good part of it. And you know what, I'm gonna come back and do the whole thing again as soon as I can. I love it.

AFTA: How do you think people will react to the revealing of yourself in AFTA?

BILL: I hope they don't laugh.

AFTA: Are you being too serious?

BILL: I think I have the ability, amidst all of this, to appreciate the absurdity of my own seriousness. And to just lay back and have fun.

AFTA: (Bill would say, if you could hear him, with a cannival barkers edge, "Let's rock!" In a lot of ways, he wants nothing more than to just let loose and have fun. Rock music is his valve, I suppose.) But back to the interview. You mean "laughing at yourself" is a good way of living?

BILL: Yes, but not while eating Italian foods. You have to take certain precautions.

AFTA: What has AFTA done to your life?

BILL: It has opened up all sorts of new things. These new friends I have, it staggers the mind. Although I don't know about this Spim, and this raisins, it seems a dangerous idea...

SPIM: What is that supposed to mean?

BILL: How did you get in here? I thought you were out in the raisin patch, already?

SPIM: Hey I'm taking over. You get 5 pages of interview, and I get ka-ka!

BILL: Just ignore him . He'll go away.

AFTA: Like VD?

BILL: He's harmless. Just let him do what he wants, and he'll tire of it.

Failure of the First Kind

jim
crawford

CLOSE ENCOUNTERS is getting much praise, even to the point where some claim is made that it is the best science fiction movie of 1977-1978.

Bull.

CLOSE ENCOUNTERS is no more science fiction than Gillgan's Island. Fancy lights and spaceships do not automatically make a movie science fiction. In order to have that quality, you must have both fiction (which is of good quality, consistent plot, and understandable), and accurate science, at least within the boundaries of what we know today.

As far as CLOSE ENCOUNTERS goes, both its science and its fiction fail on virtually every possible point. We'll examine a few of the most important failures.

First, let's get down some very basic terms. Exobiology is the study of the possible existence of life, intelligent and otherwise, on other planets. At present, the field has progressed to the point where reasonable guesses can be made about the number of inhabited planets in our galaxy, the biologies of the inhabitants, and their probable evolution. To go into *how* this much is known would take a zine many times the size of AFTA. The knowledge acquired so far is considerable, and simple extrapolation leads us to the quite definite conclusion that we are not alone.

Exosociology is the study of the sociology, behavior, mores, etc. of the alien civilizations. This, of course, is a more highly speculative area of study than exobiology, but still some concepts can be arrived at that seem more or less logical. FTL refers to a spacecraft that can travel Faster Than Light.

ALIEN BIOLOGY

Close Encounters' aliens are of an interesting appearance. It seems that their main sensory apparati are within the head region. The lack of hair is no problem- in point of fact, one projection of human evolution resulted in the conclusion that humans will eventually look much like the aliens from C.E.

However, where the movie makes a serious mistake is having the aliens calmly walking off the craft, with no breathing gear. Although an alien race may evolve which resembles man somewhat (actually, the C.E. aliens are a little *too* close to us physically to be totally acceptable), they will have evolved under a slightly different atmosphere than ours, and it is almost impossible to believe that they would be able to step out into our atmosphere without breathing aids of some kind.

In addition, there is a technical problem with the physical size of the aliens. Their spindly appearance would indicate that they had adapted to a planet with a gravity somewhat less pressing than earth's; yet, if that were so, they would be expected to be taller than normal, rather than being so short. An overly-large head means nothing, because we are told nothing about their brain size or number of convulutions of the brain. Their biology, basically, is contradictory to what it should be, within the understandings of exobiology. Their appearance also reinforces the concept of evolution on a different type of planet than earth.

Finally, a point combining biology and science. Since the aliens are so small, why do they need spaceships that are so large? With the possible exception of the mothersh itself, the other craft are simply too larg to be the expected scout craft an alien civilization would use. The craft, incide tally, cannot be compared to those in STAR WARS, as the STAR WARS craft were construct for large crews and heavy armaments, except for the FALCON itself, which still was abl to carry a sizable crew, contraband, and hyper-space capabilities, none of which is probable in a simple scout ship the CE3K aliens were using most of the time.

ALIEN SCIENCE

When you get down to basics, little of the alien science is really shown. They posse scout craft from maneuvering within the atmosphere of a planet; they possess a mothership mainly for inter-stellar travel. We must assume that the mothership is an FTL craft. They use lights involving color we can see- thus, their biology must have evolved an eye using similar wavelengths to our own. That the mothership is an FTL craft is the only logical conclusion becaus the men captured in 1945 were still about the same age, as would be expected by the Einstein relativity effect. Now, FTL craf are still considered rather improbable by today's scientists. There may be ways to get around the problems, such as using the fields generated by "black holes" in space to go from one part of the universe to another, but these ideas are *extremely* speculative, and represent more a desperat hope for a way to travel from planet to planet, so that earth would not seem to be so terribly isolated in the universe.

Since the mothership is back at least in 1977, the trip to its home star could n have taken more than 32 years (1977-1945=3 An FTL craft could get anywhere in that time; but a craft limited to light speed, which itself is rather unlikely, could onl go out some 16 light-years, and then back, and this would not allow for time necessary for acceleration and deceleration. Accordin to the excellent book CETI by Jack Stoneley, and A.T.Lawton, there are virtually *no* stars within *40* light years that would have plane that could have evolved (and kept) a form of intelligent life. Thus, the mothership from CE3K would have to be FTL, and thus w enter fantasy rather than science.

Finally, the communication form the ali use is interesting, but just doesn't seem to make sense. Communication by sounds, involving a long and complicated procedur is far less likely than even basic telepath

ALIEN SOCIOLOGY

Here is where the movie *really* begins to fall apart at the seams. In the first place, according to the best available sources on exo-biology and exo-sociology, as far as contact goes, aliens would be more likely to avoid contact, especially o such an impressive scale. The dangers involved, both to the aliens and the civilization they contact, are simply too great. THE MYSTERIOUS SIGNALS FROM OUTER SPACE by Duncan Lunan is a typical example of a book examining the problem of contact, although from *our* point of view. I cannot possibly condense all the reasoned materia Mr. Lunan uses, and leave it up to the rea to seek out and read the book. The only

CLOSE ENCOUNTERS--FAILURE OF THE FIRST KIND

by Jim Crawford (continued)

possible conclusion is that the CE3K type of encounter on a massive scale is a near impossibility, sociologically and psychologically.

Unfortunately, the problems do not stop there. CE3K raises far too many sociological and psychological questions to be acceptable. Why were the humans taken? Were they taught the native culture of their captors, for indeed the aliens did take the people against their will, at least at first. If the purpose was to teach the people, then why take people at random? Why not take those who are more involved with the search for knowledge and Truth? A random selection would lower the quality, overall, of the "intellectual pool" one had to work with. Worse yet, the actions of the aliens in taking the people resulted in considerable suffering for the families and friends of those who were taken and classified as missing. Suffering, to be anything other than sadism, needs to be somehow justified. C.E. offers no justification.

Much is made of the smile of the alien. So what? A smile to one race may be friendly, to another, a declaration of war. There are no universal symbols of friendship or hate, because there is no universal language.

Although many other problems arise, only one more point is necessary. Who do the aliens contact? The U.S. Government. In top secrecy, yet. That it itself is perhaps the most distressing point of the entire movie. If the aliens are going to go to the trouble to bring down their mothership, and have actual physical contact, they will not, by any stretch of logic, communicate only with important officials from the the government. It is obvious that they would have studied the earth, and would have developed a fairly good working knowledge of how the governments of the world work. (Besides- they had human captives to question.) Why would they contact the government, knowing the government would only hide the information?

If aliens were finally ready to reveal themselves, it would be much simpler to stage some form of cosmic display, or contact a group of non-controlled scientists rather than contact the very group that denies their existence and hides the information.

Again, these are only some of the problems with CE3K. From the points of biology, science, and sociology, CE3K is unrealistic, period. It may be a spectacular movie to look at, but it is most definitely not science fiction, and does not deserve the praise it is getting for its science.

--Jim Crawford

4688 Marburg #3, Cincinnati, OH 45209

WHY WE ALL LIKED STAR WARS

It seems now fashionable to put down STAR WARS, to say that it's not as good as we thought it was, and to be embarrassed about our intial enthusiasm about it.

Bullshit!

Perhaps it's because no one seems to realize just WHY we all like STAR WARS. Let's face it; it's likeable--now let's ask why:

First, STAR WARS has been accused of not having real people, with real emotions.

The answer, of course, is "true." This is its prime asset.

Second, STAR WARS has been accused of being "poor" science fiction (or space fantasy, if you will)

The answer, again, is "true." This is its secondary attraction.

The STAR WARS people are NOT from a galaxy far away, nor a long time ago. They speak pseudo-hip slang, and would be more at home at a McDonalds, it seems. They are of course, us. 20th Century Man surrounded by a galaxy beyond comprehension. Luckily, you don't have to be a mechanic to drive a car, and you don't have to be Arthur Clarke to handle a blaster, hyper-accelerate a ship, or try to bull your way through a job resume by lying about your credentials--and slipping on the word "parsecs."

Just as our favorite--and longest-lasting--westerns were NOT about 19th century man in the "old west" (with the possible exception of the film "Virginian") so are the SW people reflections of US, as we might like to be.

And THIS is why the characterization--its very sketchiness--WORKS! We automatically filled in the emotions that we knew would be there "if that were me" on the screen. The actors and actresses and director supplied--NOT emotional portrayal--but a HINT of emotions, and of concern.

WE knew how Luke felt when he turned his eyes from the remains of his aunt (Em?) and uncle (Henry?), we each knew...but, once we discussed it with others, and no one felt the same thing, we reflected, and realized the "shallowness" of it. What we saw was not bad acting, but a brilliant director's trick--outlining the characters, but leaving them just blank enough so that we can be Luke Skywalker for awhile.

STAR WARS is also lousy sf. It's even not that good of a space opera. But it's an excellent western. Yep, that's what it is--but we were fooled so well by a director that has--so far--NEVER missed in getting his "meaning", if you will, across to an audience.

THAT is why we all liked STAR WARS, and also why we felt so guilty in retrospect, why we say it wasn't that good, and why we deny it the title of "most universally enjoyed film." We were fooled--bamboozled but good! NOBODY today likes being fooled or tricked! Perhaps Watergate and Vietnam still burn in our memories, and we hate to be conned anymore.

But I remember watching a magician when I was a child--and I knew he was fooling me into merely THINKING he had made a cake in his hat. I felt the same when I saw Doug Henning disappear on a cycle suspended from the ceiling. I didn't mind being fooled, as long as it was by a master.

And, when it comes right down to it, I still believe in magic.

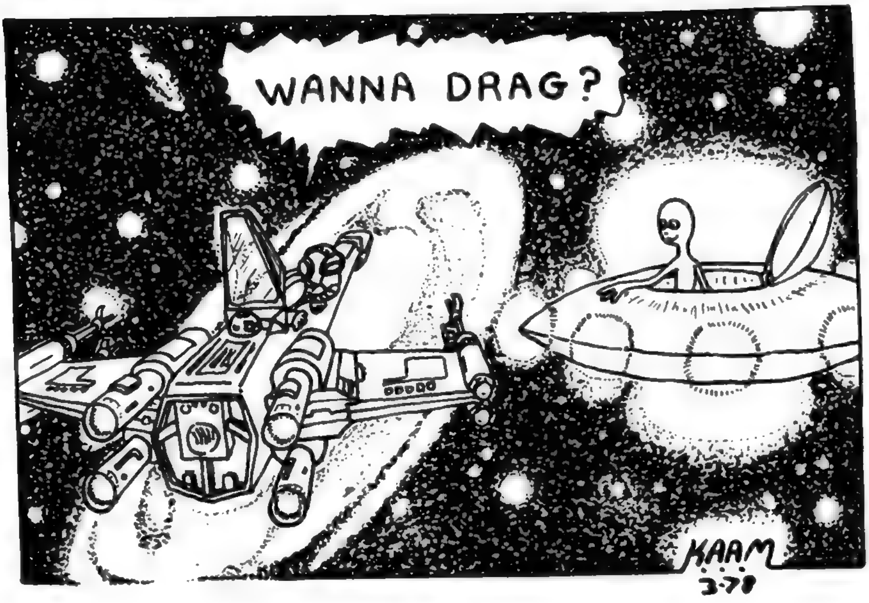
--Chester Cox

PO Box 356, Shaw AFB, SC 29152

THE SPECIAL AFTA HUMANITY AWARD

Last issue, this award went to Anita Bryant, for the way she interpreted and understood the word of our Lord, and put it into practice.

This issue, the AFTA HUMANITY AWARD goes to a number of officials of the U.S. Government who knew that the Mexicans were spraying Paraquat on marijuana being shipped to the U.S. At last, they have found a solution to the drug problem--poison the users.



STAR WARS VS. CE3K...

THE INEVITABLE COMPARISON

("Not unlike the act of comparing a Marx Brothers movie to THE GRADUATE, we forge ahead with the Inevitable Star Wars/Close Encounters comparison. I asked some of my friends which they liked better, and why? The answers came out as follows..." --Bill-Dale)

Quality judgements aside, STAR WARS is not science fiction, while CLOSE ENCOUNTERS is. Most people are fooled, because SW has numerous elements of sf, but those elements have very little to do with the purpose of the film. They are merely trappings; King Kong has elements of a travelogue, but it is not one. (Not the best example, but then, I'm tired) When pressed, I'd probably be willing to class SW as fantasy, and just conceivably as space opera, but that's about it. CE3K functions reasonably well as sf as I know it, since the sf theme is integral to the story, and a significant degree of extrapolation (sociological, this time) is included. Sometime when I have more time, I'll detail my MacLuhan based theories as to why film is basically unsuited to true sf.

--Pierce Askegren

Box 224, JMU, Harrisburg, VA 22801

("Yes, I for one, would like to hear your theory. Next issue?" --Bill-Dale)

Though the Muncie people were funny (pathetic, but funny) and the lights were pretty, Close Encounters doesn't do anything that 2001: A Space Odyssey didn't do ten years ago. As for comparing it to Star Wars, both films approach you on the same intellectual level (a low level, at that) Nice, quaint romanticism. Of course STAR WARS has no point but that of entertainment for its own sake, the kind so often lamented these days since it's produced so seldom. Nice wholesome entertainment is all right once in awhile, but a little sugar goes a long way. And when Solo saves the day, well gee, there's a chill running up your neck. If you like that type of thing, fine, if you don't, it's strictly a matter of taste.

Close Encounters has more of a point to it--we aren't alone. And they convince you, you agree with them. The reason for that is that they've caused you to make an emotional leap (boy howdy, lookit them lights), and most people will make that leap, being too lazy to attempt reasoning which can be a struggle.

--Mark Lamport

316 S. St. Louis St., South Bend, IN 46617

I don't think that a SW/CE3K comparison is possible because you're talking about (in my opinion) two movies that are as far apar as wood and steel. Star Wars is pure fanta for fantasy's sake. The special effects were great, but that's about all. Storywi it has about as much punch to it as Humpty Dumpty. Without the special effects I thi we would've said to our friends, "Hey, there's a new B s-f flick out called Star Wars. Let's take a look at it to kill som time."

As for Close Encounters, I feel that there is a spiritual and biblical connotation to this movie. Here too, the special effects were fantastic, moreso than Star Wars, but also we had a viable story with which to relate. With Star Wars, all you could say was, "Darth Vader is tough. Wow! Did you see that neat explosion?" But wit Close Encounters you can say, "That poor man is having a tremendous emotional battl with himself. Which side will win? Will forget about Devil's Tower and resume his life in the so-called 'normal' manner, or will he pursue this enigma to its conclusi

I don't like to consider Close Encounter a "science-fiction" film. I (and many othe would like to think of it as "science-speculation". The story is fictional but the elements are not. Like all the police sho

THE INEVITABLE COMPARISON (continued)

The story is fictional but it can, and probably will happen, given enough time. I think Close Encounters is very much like these shows, only their using UFO's and extraterrestrials, rather than the murderer that escaped from prison, or the cop that's on the take.

Star Wars, by no means, is the year's best movie, or the greatest s-f film ever made. In my opinion, it doesn't hold a candle to THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL or FORBIDDEN PLANET. I wouldn't even put it in my top five. The top 10 yes; The top 5 no way. In my book, Close Encounters is #1.

--Willie L. Peppers
1043 Dixie Highway, Louisville, KY 40210

I preferred Star Wars because it has been so very long since a movie was made for pure and simple enjoyment. The fast action, loveable characters, and light banter made it excellent and easy escapist material. It also made the movies shortcomings almost impossible to notice. For a short while I forgot I was on a boring planet with mundane and some difficult problems.

Close Encounters was too close to reality and more importantly left too many unanswered questions which popped to mind while being viewed and never answered them. Star Wars provided me with characters and situations I could believe in; while Close Encounters did not.

--Dan Beck
153 West 9 North, Lehi, UT 84043

I liked CE better but the reasons are many and varied. The first reason is that by the time STAR WARS got here, I had read a tremendous amount of material about how great it was and was really excited about it. My expectation was so great that I doubt any film could've lived up to it. With CE, I swore I wasn't going to read a thing about it (and kept true to my word). So when it rolled around, I nothing of the plotline, spfx, etc. and I think that enhanced my enjoyment. That element of "surprise" that had been missing when I saw STAR WARS. Actors? SW: Aside from Guiness and Cushing the three film leads were pretty substandard. Harrison Ford and Carrie Fisher both cannot deliver a line and Mark Hamill gives it his best shot and comes out the best of the three. CE: Spielberg has lined up quite an array of accomplished actors. Dreyfuss, Garr (playing her usual daffy self which isn't too far from reality), Dillon all deliver their lines very well and this enhances the emotional impact. Script: Lucas seems to be under the impression that his stilted and cliche-ridden dialogue helps make the film work when in fact the spfx are so good people don't really bother with the dialogue. Their mind is on other things. Spielberg, on the other hand, uses his dialogue (along with other devices) to create suspense, tension. Spfx aren't used in every shot (as with SW) and his dialogue has to be believeable and real enough to hold our interest. Scientific accuracy? You've got me, science isn't my field.

--Tom Mason
705 Draper, Blacksburg, VA 24060

My first reaction after seeing CE3K for the first time was "Gee, it's too bad, everyone is going to think they are going in to see another Star Wars--and they're not." Afterthoughts: I like Star Wars better because it succeeded in doing what it set out to do better than CE3K (the respective goals being no way alike).

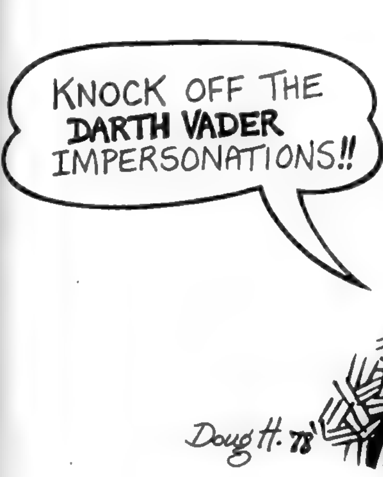
Star Wars was an adventure fantasy with likeable heroes, despicable villains, and no pretense of trickery into suspension of belief. It was possibly one of the best well rounded entertainment movies ever with enough meat (barely) for some speculation from science fiction fans (questions that come to mind: the establishment of the Empire, the sociology of a truly mechanized society, the sociology of a humanity dominated galactic culture, etc.) CE3K is a serious movie; a movie that presents a topic in an illustrative manner that requires an honest evaluation at the end--do you believe or not. As entertainment, it would fail for an ingoing attitude convinced the basic idea was absurd. I frankly did not encounter a sense of awe in the picture. One the one hand we have this nameless schmuck who goes through all those weird and wonderful changes. But, we have on the other hand this science crew who take in an encounter with an all too blase attitude (one heart felt whisper at the end of "Son-of-a-bitch! They are real" would have made the movie.)

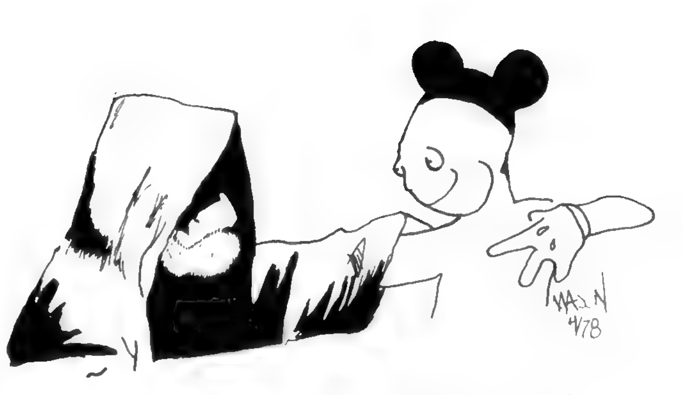
--Steve Souza

I believe STAR WARS will become a Cult Film, a VERY large Cult Film, but a Cult Film all the same. Unlike STAR WARS, a fandom really can't grow up around it because there's little to base a fandom. I simply can't imagine a CE fanzine that could last more than a single issue. You can't write scholarly pieces on Neary's relationships with his wife, children, etc. With CE, its the concept that makes the film, "the aliens have landed and they like us a lot" routine which turns people on and into the film. Its something everyone wants to hear, and they are told it so beautifully...

Though I haven't seen any total SW zines, I can imagine people writing "fan fiction" about what happens after the end of SW, writing articles about what Leia's world might have been like, how The Empire started, and printing crude drawings of the whole SW gang. SW breeds that kind of excitement because its a fun film.

--Steven Alan Bennett
842 Hunt Street
Akron, OH 44306


KNOCK OFF THE DARTH VADER IMPERSONATIONS!!
Doug H. 78



"YOUR MOTHERSHIP WEARS COMBAT BOOTS"

THE INEVITABLE COMPARISON (continued)

CE3K seems to be missing that certain something that made STAR WARS (and Lucas' AMERICAN GRAFFITI) extra special. Lucas makes you care about the characters and brings you into another world. CE3K didn't quite touch me as much. While that first viewing of STAR WARS was so uplifting and awe-inspiring at times, CE3K couldn't sustain the same amount of momentum. The "mother-ship" seemed overly elaborate to me, too pretentious and gaudy. I can't exactly pin-point something in CE3K that "spoiled" it for me, but it just didn't impress me as much as I had hoped it would. It was like going to see your favorite comedian, seeing him perform impressively...all the flash and pizzazz, but still something didn't quite "do" it for you despite his efforts. CE3K seemed kind of anti-climactic, but it was still a damn good movie, but not as good as Star Wars. However corny STAR WARS may have gotten in places, it all hung together and worked. That first viewing was the only time I can remember sitting there and going "Golllllly...woowwwwww." etc. in many a moon (maybe at 2001 and YELLOW SUBMARINE, but not like this)

--Doug Hazelwood
PO Box 3762, Victoria, TX 77901

First, I have not yet seen CLOSE ENCOUNTERS, although I have read the book. I do, however, have a fairly extensive background in reading and research in astronomy, life on other planets, UFOs, and the paranormal. I have read both books, and will therefore compare them more from that basis.

First, neither book nor movie is science fiction. STAR WARS can classify as science fantasy, with a minimum on the science aspect. The concepts of hyper-space and measuring time in parsecs are glaring scientific errors. Numerous trivial points of faulty science are present throughout the work. The main object is that the "aliens" (remember- this is another galaxy, a long time ago) are exact duplicates of humans. In reality, from a scientific viewpoint, the chances that any other planet would have intelligent beings who are exactly similar to humans are virtually non-existent. It is interesting to note, here, that in the book, under one of the photos, there is a statement made that STAR WARS took place in a galaxy thousands of light years away. If that were true, then it would have taken place in one of the two "satellite" galaxies that are tied into our own Milky Way galaxy, and would mean that the humans in STAR WARS were the ancestors of earth-humans. Otherwise, the nearest galaxy is about 2 million light years away. In Close Encounters, the alien are more realistic, as they ar humanoid, but most definitely not human. Thus, the biology of the aliens is acceptable. Unfortunately, their psycholog is not. CLOSE ENCOUNTERS simp leaves far too many questions.

Visually, C.E. is supposed to be fantastic. Fine, but a visual display does not automatically make a quality movie. 2001: A SPACE ODYSSEY was a fantastic movie visually, but made little or no philosophical sense. STAR WARS is another visually exciting movie-- but then again STAR WARS is a movi for fun, although the concept of Force is carefully woven in for the more mature person to ponder after the movie itself is over.

Plotwise: CLOSE ENCOUNTERS has to be the worst of the two plot-wise, because the book and movie leave far too many questions unanswered, and the only possible extrapolative view from CE is that alien communications will be conducted only in secrecy by the U.S. Government, a not-very-pleasant thought.

STAR WARS, on the other hand, is at one level a basic good vs. evil plot, and succeeds well along those lines. On the deeper level, in dealing with the concept of the Force, there has been one criticism made that the Force is illogical because a reference is made to the fact that Darth Vader was seduced "by the dark side of the Force." Philosophically, all power and all knowledge are essentially neutral. It is the use to which that power and that knowled are put that determines their good or evil qualities. To say that Vader was "seduced by the dark side of the Force" does not necessarily imply that the Force is actually divided into a good and an evil side; rather, it states that Vader chose to use the

A UBS SPECIAL REPORT...A BIG-FOOT AND A OBSCENE PHONE CALLER WERE ARRESTED TODAY. IT IS REPORTED THAT THE OBSCENE PHONE CALLER WAS THREATENING THE BIG-FOOT WITH A FLASHLITE.

THE INEVITABLE COMPARISON (continued)

knowledge and power present in the force for evil purposes. An analogy is a political who is "seduced by the dark side of Congressional power," and abuses the privileges of his office. The U.S. Government is not divided into good and evil sides; the man just chose to use his power for evil, period.

Overall, then, I would have to state that STAR WARS is by far the superior of the two movies, but even at that fails to qualify as science fiction of any lasting merit.

--Jim Crawford
4688 Marburg #3, Cincinnati, OH 45209

THE FINAL SCORE
NUKES-0; A FUTURE-1

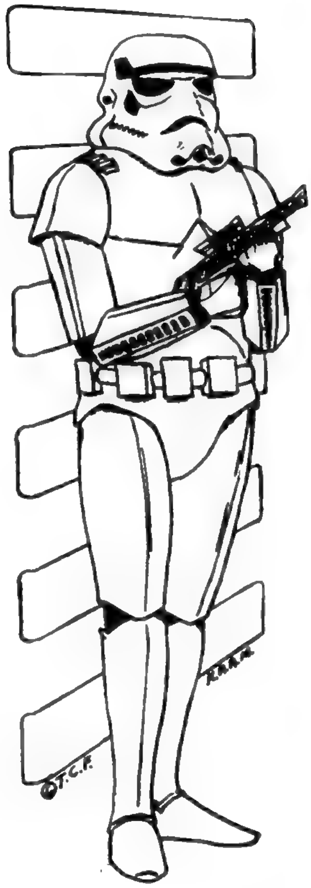
Just got word that the Nuclear Regulatory Commission will halt construction on the nuclear power plant in Seabrook. My only regret is that I was here in New Jersey doing AFTA instead of being up there in New Hampshire demonstrating as I should have been. What marked this demonstration (and in fact, all nuclear demonstrations) was the attention given to non-violence and legal behavior during the demonstrations. Mucho change from Kent State. We have all learned our lessons, and it seems to be paying off well (I hadn't really suspected a decision like that to come so quickly, if at all. I was surprised, quite pleasantly surprised). But the fight is not over. Solar energy stares us in the face as the only sensible alternate to our energy problems in 1978, and yet construction of nuclear power plants, UNSAFE nuclear power plants is being planned at this very moment. If you want to help, either write to me, or contact either one or both of these organizations for further information:

SUNSPARK PRESS
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

THE CLAMSHELL ALLIANCE
62 Congress Street
Portsmouth, NH 03801

I don't really have to thank you. The awareness and protection we will give our country, and if such a thing could occur (God help us) our planet, is enough of a payment for anyone.

FIGHT FOR A NON-NUCLEAR FUTURE



And now, in a more or less, diametrically opposite vein, I want to thank everyone who sent in dead baby jokes for the DEAD BABY JOKE CONTEST. Please continue sending any you find out about, and next issue I will present a more or less complete dead baby concordance. My two favorites so far are these (and one of them is not even a dead baby joke, just to show you how bizarre I really am)

WHAT IS RED AND GREEN AND GOES 70 M.P.H.? A frog in blender.

WHAT IS RED AND SPINS AROUND THE GARAGE?

A baby stuck in a lawnmower.

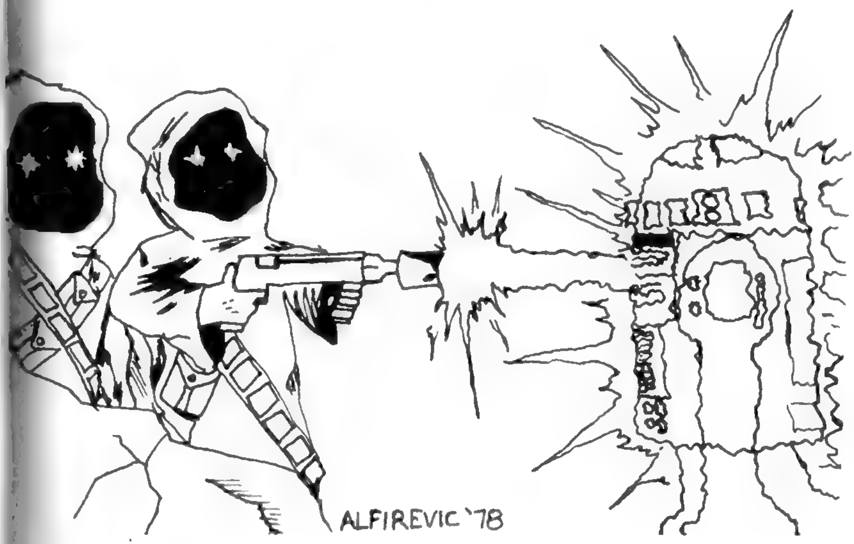
The first is from Willie B. Smith, the second from Jack Seabrook. I will not print their addresses in order to protect them.

The superlative dead baby joke remains:

WHAT DO YOU BUY A DEAD BABY FOR A BIRTHDAY GIFT?

A DEAD PUPPY.

It combines the blackest of humours without being gross or overly explicit. Care to top it?



THE ROCKY HORROR PICTURE QUIZ PART ONE

Don't get out the album and cheat, or go see the movie with this thing in tow. Do it FROM MEMORY. I'll print the answers and the winners (and how many they got right) next issue.

1. Name 6 actors/actresses mentioned in "Science Fiction Double Feature" (George Pal is not an actor, he does not count)
2. In the wedding scene, The American Gothic couple (farmer & wife) appear as what two characters later in the film?
3. What is the name of the actor who plays Dr. Scott?
4. Where did Betty meet Ralph and Brad meet Janet? (same place)
5. What does it say on the side of Ralph's car?
6. Janet: "An hour ago, she was plain old Betty Monroe, and now she's Mrs. Ralph ______."
7. Brad: "I really love the ______ way you beat the other girls to the bride's bouquet."
8. What does Brad do with the engagement ring before he puts it on Janet's finger?
9. Who plays Brad Majors in the film?
10. Charles "No Neck" Gray says, "It's true there were dark storm clouds, ____, _____, _____ (three adjectives) toward which they were driving."
11. What is Brad & Janet's home town?
12. What is playing on the radio in the car when Brad & Janet are driving in the rain? (name of person, title of piece)
13. What stupid thing does Brad ("asshole") forget to do, so that they have to go to the "castle" for help?
14. What does Janet give as the reason (jokingly) for her not wanting Brad to go to the castle alone? (Hint: it has to do with the owner of the phone)
15. How many motorcycles pass by Brad & Janet while they are driving? (the number that they see/have seen, not the number we see)
16. How many motorcycles are parked outside of the castle?
17. What does Janet do to the flat tire?
18. What is the title of the newspaper that Janet reads in the car, and when she is outside in the rain, puts over her head to protect herself?
19. What city and state is it published in?
20. The window from which Riff-Raff sings a verse in "There's A Light", what floor is it on?
21. "There's a light in the darkness of everybody's _____."
22. What is Riff-Raff's first line to Brad & Janet at the door?
23. What is Charles Gray's official stage name/title, according to the movie's opening credit
24. What is Brad's first evaluation of the Frankenstein Place? (Hint: What does he think it i
25. What are the specific instructions (the lyrics, not your own words) to the "Time Warp?"
26. Magenta: "In another dimension, with _______ _______, I see all."
27. What is Columbia's title/job at the Frank 'n' Furter mansion?
28. Where/how does Columbia trip while doing her tap?
29. What does the patch on the shoulder of Brad's jacket read?
30. What is the dance that Brad mentions to the Transylvanians after the time warp? "Say! Do any of you guys know _________."
31. Brad: "Just a moment, Janet, we don't want to interfere with their celebration."
    Janet: "Brad, this isn't the Junior _______ __ _________."
32. Brad:"They're probably just foreigners with ways different than our own. They may do some more ___________."
33. What planet and galaxy does Frank hail from? Two names, first the planet, then the galaxy.
34. What does the number on Frank's leg read? (There is a small number there, from a suspected prison term (?))
35. What reason does Frank give for making Rocky? "Ive been making a man with blond hair and a tan, and he's good for ______."
36. Frank: "But maybe the rain isn't really to blame, so I'll remove the _____, but not the symptom."
37. What color is Columbia's socks in her scene with Eddie?
38. What two word command does Magenta give to Brad and Janet as they board the elevator to ascend to Frank's laboratory?
39. Does Brad have any tattoos?
40. To begin the creation scene, Frank gives Riff-Raff two orders? "Turn up the switches on the ____ _______. Step up the reactor power input how many more points?
41. The Sword of ________is hanging over Rocky's head?
42. What is Columbia's opinion of Rocky?
43. What is Frank's response to Janet's comment: "I don't like men with too many muscles?"
44. Frank: "A weakling weighing __ pounds, will get sand in his face when he's kicked to the ground..."
45. What does the card on the weights Frank gives to Rocky read?
46. What piece of athletic equipment (not the weights) does Frank bring out for Rocky?
47. What is the relationship between Dr. Scott and Eddie?
48. Where does Eddie break out of?
49. What instrument does Eddie play during "Hot Patatootie?"
50. Frank tells Rocky not to be upset, because his axing of Eddie was a "_____ ________"
51. After Frank sings "I Can Make You A Man" and he goes to the bedroom with Rocky, the Transylvanians can be heard chanting a five word cheer? What is it?
52. What does Riff-Raff tease Rocky with?
53. What is the relationship between Riff-Raff and Magenta?
54. What color is the decor in Janet's bedroom? Brad's?
55. Janet: "I thought there's no use getting into heavy petting, it only leads to trouble and _____ _________."

THE ROCKY HORROR PICTURE QUIZ PART TWO

56. How many basic changes of costume does Frank make during the picture? Describe them.
57. What electrical appliance do Magenta and Columbia fool around with during Janet's "T-T-T-T-T-Touch Me?"
58. How many times does Frank whip Riff-Raff for allowing Rocky to escape?
59. Where does Dr. Scott first appear within the interior of the castle?
60. What does he find in the ashtray?
61. Dr. Scott works for the government, and is attached to the "bureau of investigation which you call ______."
62. What is the title of the device Frank uses to bring Dr. Scott from the Zen Room up to his laboratory?
63. What does Frank suspect (after finding out Dr. Scott and Brad know each other) Brad's real purpose was?
64. What does Dr. Scott give Frank as the real purpose of his visit?
65. What is the five-name litany repeated after Janet and Rocky are discovered in the tank? In the proper order, now. (Hint, one name is repeated twice). Also tell who said each name.
66. What instrument/device does Magenta use to signal that "Dinner is prepared!"
67. Who is on either side of Janet at the dinner table. Also designate right and left (Janet's right and left, not ours)
68. What toast does Frank make at the table? To _______ _________ and ________.
69. What does Frank reveal as Dr. Scott's real name?
70. Dr. Scott: "From the day he was born, all he (Eddie) wanted was _______ and _______" (From Dr. Scott's song?)
71. What possession of Eddie's does Dr. Scott hold in his hands during the song?
72. What does Eddie's note say? Which word is misspelled?
73. What object does Dr. Scott remove from Eddie's possession?
74. Frank: "I'll tell you once, I'll tell you twice, you better wise up, Janet Weiss./Your _________ _______ don't taste too nice."
75. Janet: "My feet, I can't move my feet." Dr. Scott: "My ____, I can't move my ______."
76. What is the "audio-vibratory, physio-molecular transport device"that "we" earthlings too, have been working on called?
77. What does it do?
78. What does Janet think Frank will do to them with this device?
79. What does Brad call Frank at this point? ("You're a _______, but you better not try to hurt her, Frank Furter.")
80. What is the device Frank uses to incapacitate Brad, Janet, and Dr. Scott?
81. Frank: "It's not easy having a good time, even smiling ___________" Complete the line.
82. Who wrote the songs for Rocky Horror?
83. Where did Rocky's brain come from?
84. Magenta: "I ask for nothing, master." Frank: "And you ________________." Complete.
85. In what order are the various participants of the Floor Show de-medusa-ed?
86. How many hours old is Rocky at the point of the beginning of the Floor Show?
87. What do the participants of the Floor Show ask to keep them "safe from my trouble and pain" (Four words)
88. Who directed the film?
89. What is the adjective Janet uses to describe Frank's lust? "It's a gas that Frankie landed, his lust is ________."
90. What is the title on the tower behind Frank as he is on the diving board?
91. Who play s Magenta?
92. Frank: "Whatever happened to Fay Wray, and that delicate satin-draped frame. /As it clung to her thigh, I started to cry, 'cause I ____________." Complete.
93. What is the admonishment to we people in the audience as they are swimming around in the pool? Dont _______, _________.
94. On which leg (right or left) does Dr. Scott wear his hose and heels?
95. Who does Janet ask God to bless at the end of the Floor Show number? (Hint: Was a 50's movie actress, very obscure)
96. Magenta's costume at the end of the film echoes a character in Bride of Frankenstein. Who was the actress who played this character in the movie?
97. What reason does Riff give to Frank for his taking command, and the mission being a failure?
98. Frank explains his actions by singing what song? What singer is his actions and mannerisms reminiscent of during this song?
99. When Riff-Raff said "we" were to return to Transylvania, who was he referring to?
100. What does the beam of Riff-Raff's laser consist of?
101. What does Dr. Scott believe is Frank's crime?
102. Riff-Raff: "Say goodbye to all of...this, and hello to_ ________." (to Frank)
103. In what order does Riff zap the characters?
104. Rocky's carrying Frank's body at the end of the film echoes the scene in what famous horror flick?
105. What does Riff- Raff kill his compatriots?
106. Why should Dr. Scott, Brad and Janet leave immediately?
107. The cover of what comic book from the 50's is behind Charles Gray? (It is a page in an open book)
108. What tv series does Dr. Scott mention at the end of the film?

NEXT ISSUE: A Report on the Rocky Horror Cult--WHY THEY DO IT, and a speculation of what Frank's original mission to Earth was. JOIN THE ROCKY HORROR APA--See Zilber's article in Part One.

A DISEASE FOR THE 70'S

bill-dale
marcinko

In 1980, when the new Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, or DSM III is released (the DSM is the Bible of all psychologists and psychiatrists), there is a good chance there will be a new category, 301.81, called the Narcissistic Personality Disorder. As my statement on the 70's, which I've considered the ME or Selfishness decade, I am going to run some excerpts from an interview with Otto Kernberg, which appeared originally in the June 1978 issue of PSYCHOLOGY TODAY. Let it be a statement on the society which fostered this new illness.

I suspect, that to a certain degree, we are all narcissists, focused at times on ourselves and the compliments paid to us. SOmeone who is a narcissist can function quite well in society, and achieve some fame, and lead a very comfortable life. The real crime here is that such an individual, so involved with himself, has no sense of others, no sense of growth to some ideal, no progress and real achievement. Speaking very personally, I have always thought that life whatever else it is, is first and foremost a learning experience, and that each person, through interaction with other people, must graduate to some higher level constantly, re-apply and graduate again. The real danger in life is thinking that you must put yourself in position where you are secure (college diploma, job, wife, children, car, dog, etc.) and then you can rest, staving off the ravages of reality. Bull shit. The road to true happiness is found by struggling, the harder you struggle the better. Struggling to learn. Struggling to accomplish. Struggling to be the person you have always wanted to be. The saddest person I know is the one who is bored, who is not actively pursuing something. Although the discussion of this may seem a bit facetious to you, I find it sad. I find it sad because I know people who are like the person Dr. Kernberg describes. I find it sad because I can see myself in bits and pieces of this article, too, and I know I must work harder to improve upon it.

The narcissist is basically a very dependent person, although he gives the illusion of independence and well-being (on the surface). He is dependent because he must have people applauding and complementing him at every turn of his head. But at the same time he is resentful of the people who applaud him, because he knows that without them, he is nothing. He could not function. Because he knows it (even unconsciously), he really doesn't like people and accept them as people. They count as admirers, as members of an ever-increasing crowd.

After receiving compliments from people, he gets restless and bored and often treats his former fans (if you apply this to some film, tv, and comic book personalities, this is surprisingly true) with contempt. His relationships with people are exploitative and parasitic. This is all masked by a very attractive personality, and very often, an equally charming appearance.

The narcissist very often is quite physically attractive, or has a special talent that makes them unique. This just makes it worse, because they immerse themselves in their achievements. In reality, they are people who have a lot of promise, and their work has a lot of glitter on the surface, but very little depth (just like their personalities) Basically, they feel that they are unloved, and consequently parade these talents (or physical attributes--many sexual promiscuous men are narcissists) in an attempt to hide this fact from others and themselves.

The narcissist moves from friend to friend very quickly. He also moves from sex partner to sex partner quickly, all in an attempt to acknowledge himself to the greatest number of people possible. A narcissist can't really fall in love, either. It is not because he loves himself too much (as the old cliche goes) but has this overwhelming desire for a larger audience to perform to. I like what Dr. Kernberg says about falling in love, and what precludes a narcissist from the experience. So I quote from the interview directly:

"The capacity to fall in love implies the ability to idealize another person. In a sense, all love begins as infatuation. We see the loved one as extraordinary, remarkable, even perfect. Inevitably, disappointment sets in; things look different in the light of an ongoing relationship. But when one is in love, one can regenerate the feeling of idealization of the other person again and again throughout a long-term commitment. I have often observed this clinically with good couples. But the narcissist cannot idealize any individual for very long. As soon as an idealized person responds to the narcissist, this person loses his or her value."

I am of the opinion that society, as an amorphous whole (media, church, state, child-rearing techniques, etc.) is at the present in a time where narcissism is rewarded. We do not think of the actions that we do as being universal actions, but simply private ones. For example, a colleg student today working hard to land a position with I.B.M., as opposed to that same student not too long ago demonstrating against the War (an idealistic goal). Here is Dr. Kernberg's answer to that question:

"Our society does this by fostering superficial ways of being accepted and admired, namely, through emphasizing the accumulation of material goods. Obtaining material proof of personal value is very similar to the narcissist's obtaining prais in order to feel worthwhile. A society that fosters competition, with its concomitants of envy and greed, may be fostering pathological narcissistic traits. And, theoretically at least, there are other societies in the world which, by eliminatin competition and insisting on people's mutual responsibilities toward one another, may foster altruistic traits."

Hear. Hear. Our society does provide a way for people to ignore the emptiness in their lives. Television is one of them. There are many other institutions which as a rule put people on hold emotionally, or pacify them. It is about time these things are realized for what they are.

--Bill-Dale Marcinko

MEDIUM BANAL

TV NEWS, REVIEWS

Next issue most tv news will be conspicuously absent, primarily because by the time the news gets to you it is outdated and unusable when it gets to you anyway. Second, I'm taking over editorship of PHOENIX, and will publish the tv news (and ratings) as a regular feature inthe MONTHLY, MAILED FIRST CLASS pages of that magazine. I think you'll all agree that news must go first class mail if it is to be any good at all. Now I just have to convince you to subscribe to PHOENIX...

COMEDY

Rob Reiner, Billy Crystal, Martin Mull, and Harry Shearer (who writes for A2N and has appeared as Jeremy Moore and David John Decker (the Tom Snyder take-off)) will do a one-time special for ABC, THE TV SHOW, a satire of American tv. Should be good. // Rob Reiner will work on LOVE ME AND I'LL BE YOUR FRIEND, a tv-movie he wrote with Phil Miskin for Columbia, and will star with his wife Penny Marshall. He and Phil worked on the extremely good FREE COUNTRY series.// George Schlatter, producer of Laugh-In, will do 6 hour-long comedy specials, 3 each for 2 years, for NBC. He says it won't be of the Laugh-In format. // Norman Lear has left TV to do feature films, but his production company, continues producing shows, ALL IN THE FAMILY, GOOD TIMES, THE JEFFERSONS their returning shows, IN THE BEGINNING and APPLE PIE their new entries this fall. // Ed Asner, Lee Grant, Marsha Mason, Richard Chamberlain will star in Neil Simon's THE GOOD DOCTOR for PBS. It will be the final performance of the series GREAT PERFORMANCES this fall. // Harvey Korman and Buddy Hackett will star in the biography of Bud Abbott and Lou Costello, BUD AND LOU, for NBC. // Bill Daily (Howard on the Bob Newhart show) will play a resort manager in CBS 2-hour pilot, RENDESVOUS HOTEL. Sounds strangely like LOVE BOAT, on land, on which by a strange coincidence, a supporting actor on another recently cancelled MTM comedy has the starring role. // Carol Burnett will star in a tv adaptation of the Erma Bombeck humorous (this can be debated) bestseller, THE GRASS IS ALWAYS GREENER OVER THE SEPTIC TANK. // Woody Allen's TAKE THE MONEY AND RUN will be available to syndicated (non-network) markets this fall, after airing on ABC this summer. Its one of my favorite Allen's if only for the cretin at the end and the mother and father in "disguise" with nose glasses (which drive me into convulsions).

SF, COMICS

Harlan Ellison and Ben Bova are suing the producers of FUTURE COP series and Paramount for $13 million, on account of them ripping off Harlan's short story (which way back when was to be a tv-movie) about a robot policeman and turned it into FUTURE COP. Someone should have sued the producers of that show just over the quality of the scripts and acting and Ernest Borgnine. The original title of the production was BRILLO. // PBS will do Ursula LeGuin's THE LATHE OF HEAVEN in a 2-part adaptation, as a pilot for a possible series. It is about a man exploited in a future society because he has the power to make dreams come true. // NBC is doing a MANDRAKE THE MAGICIAN pilot. // No word on CAPT. AMERICA, HOWARD, SUB MARINER and HUMAN TORCH movies at CBS. NBC had to relinquish rights to the Human Torch in its Saturday morning FANTASTIC FOUR cartoon. CBS' tv-movie had better be good, only for the agony we'll suffer having to put up with that stupid robot FF replacement. // Universal is doing three 2-hour BUCK ROGERS films for NBC. // NBC has bought and scheduled for next season, the 6 part adaptation of THE MARTIAN CHRONICLES as a mini-series. Richard Matheson wrote it from the Ray Bradbury book. It began production May 1978. Bradbury is quite satisfied with it. //

PUBLIC TV

CINEMA SHOWCASE, beginning in October, with PUMPING IRON with Arnold Schwarzenegger will feature Wertmuller's SEVEN BEAUTIES Alan Resnais' PROVIDENCE, Ray's DISTANT THUNDER, Barbara Kopple's HARLAN COUNTY U.S.A. (which won the Oscar for best documentary). In total, 10 films. Has everyone been watching the Hitchcock retrospective of early films on PBS? // MTM Productions will produce GOING HOME AGAIN, a mini-series for next fall for PBS. It will feature Dan O'Herlihy, & Teresa Wright as the heads of a fictional American family who has to cope with the events of the 60's. Perhaps someone will finally make a good representative show about the sixties. Unlike the putrid melodramatic LOOSE CHANGE adaptation on NBC not too long ago. // A new show called SNEAK PREVIEWS will serve as a consumer guide to movies by showing clips from films previewed. // ACADEMY LEADERS will feature short subjects and documentaries that have won Academy Awards. //

FALL SEASON

The fall season is already upon us as you read this. Ah, trepidation. Next issue I will try to say something witty and intelligent about what promises to be a foul year. Except for MacLean Stevenson in IN THE BEGINNING, and the PAPER CHASE, it doesn't look too good, although MTM's TAXI looks good, ditto WKRP IN CINCINNATI.

ALBUMS

This really has nothing to do with television, but I just remembered it. I just got a whole shipment of blank cassettes in, and I'm recording my friends albums like mad. If you have any rock, comedy, or soundtrack music and you want to spread it around, I'll pay you 15¢ for each album you allow me to borrow (sending them through the mail, natch). Please send me a list of what you've got on hand. I'm especially interested about 60's protest music, and 70's punk discs. Send it to me, Bill-Dale Marcinko, RPO 5009, Rutgers U, New Brunswick, NJ 08903. And spread the gospel of rock and roll, already.

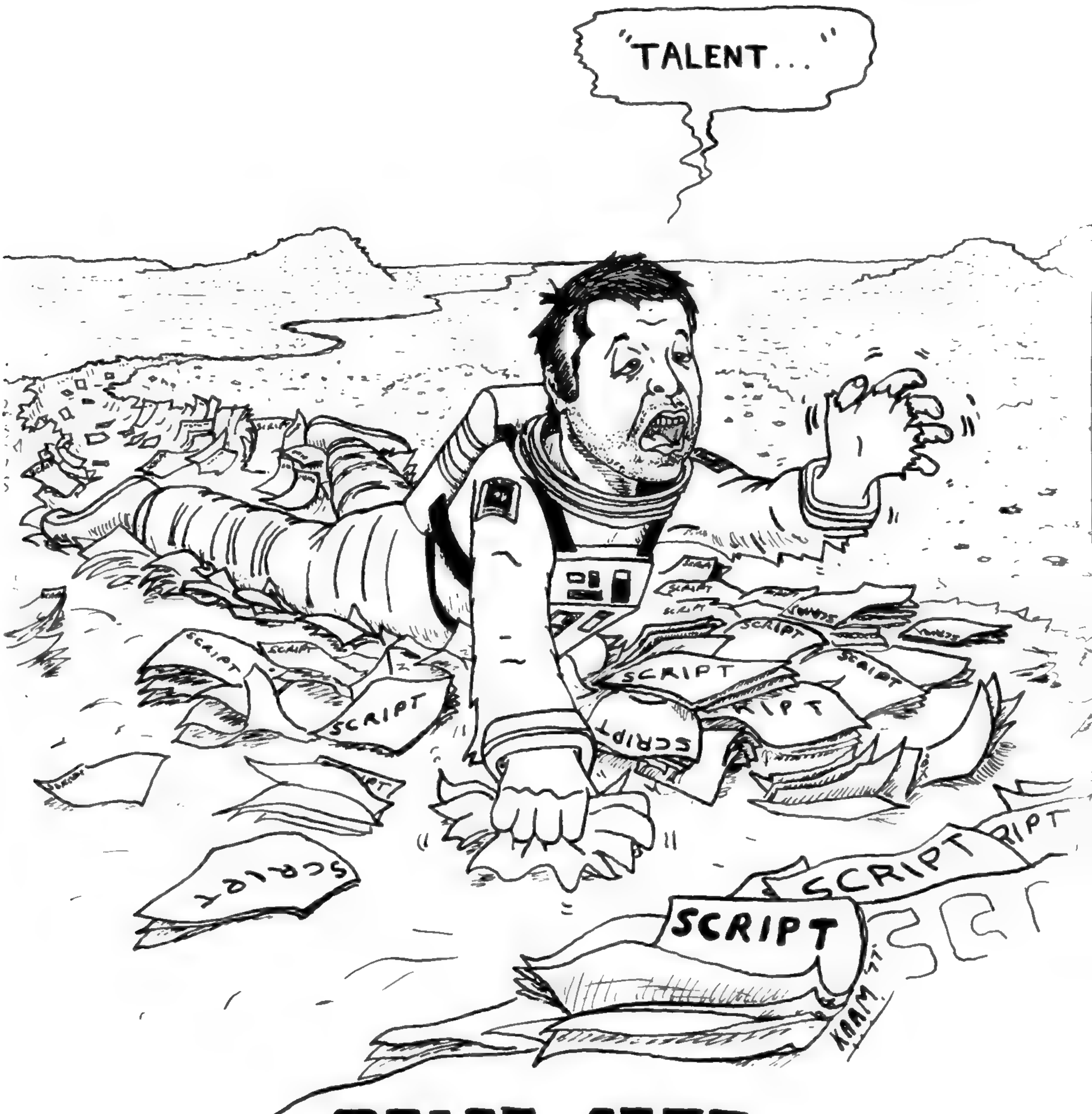
MENTALLY UNSTABLE? STAY HOME

An Austrian psychiatrist warns that vacations often trigger psychological and emotional breakdowns. Doctor Heinz Brokop says that the new enviroment, boredom or let-downs following vacation planning can send fragile personalities over the brink. Brokop reports that the most common vacation crack-up occurs among persons who travel by themselves, begin to reevaluate their lives and don't like what they find.

from THE AQUARIAN, July 5, 1978

The aerosol spray cans that have "enviromentally safe" (protect the ozone) propellants in them can explode, seriously injuring or killing the users. As you know, the fluorocarbon propellants threatened our ozone layer, so what do the companies do. They come out with HYDROCARBON propellants, which are safe for the ozone but extremely flammable and explosive. Since 1973, over 350 Americans have been killed by spray cans, 20,000 injured.

(From NEW TIMES MAGAZINE)



SPACE: 1977

TONIGHT: ALMOST LIVE
AND NEARLY FROM
HOLLYWOOD, IT'S...

AMERICA 2-NIGHT

30 MINUTES OF
BIG TIME TV ON
THE UBS NETWORK
WHERE WE PUT 'U'
BEFORE THE 'BS'

AN INDEX

The shows I did not get a chance to see are marked with an (*); the information I do have is from the sorely-inadequate TV Guide listings. I appreciate anyone who has cassettes, notes, or just a good memory on the missing shows to get in touch with me right away. By the way, would any of you be interested in a FERNWOOD 2-NIGHT index (from last summer)? I can do one of those for next issue.

4/10/78- Barth (to be referred to as "B" from now on) explains his rise to network TV on the UBS Network (where we put "U" before the "BS")...MONEY TALKS (with a wonderfully tacky card with play money being pushed out of its mouth), where guests buy air time on A2N with THE FRIEDKIN FAMILY SINGERS, who do a song from "Annie", but aren't allowed to talk to B. and Jerry since they didn't purchase the "optional talk time." ...DR. WILLARD HONEYWELL (whose card says Dr. Willard "Butch" Honeywell) who claims homosexuality is caused by a virus. He has developed a vaccine, but no one wants to take it...CHARLTON HESTON B. asks "Chuck" about his first sexual experience. J. puts his foot in his mouth as usual by (with typical Hubbardian logic) concluding that Charlton Heston was "inept" (J: "It's those 'teen' years. There you were in the back seat of a car with your boxer shorts...") Heston has to leave to take one of the Friedkin girls to the bathroom (B: "It's the same one for men and women, so just knock.") ...Videotape of STEVEN HAYS from his prison cell on death row. His electrocution will be televised on Friday, 4/14 on "ELECTROCUTION NIGHT '78"

4/11/78- B. defends the UBS studio from charging $3.00 for tickets to get into see A2N. The AC/DCS, 3 disco dancers for whom J. bought a drink (one drink) the night before...GARY BURGHOFF plugs his frozen yogurt...WANDA FORD, who wants to buy some 'smashing' clothes for starving children in other countries ("Some of them are literally wearing plaids and stripes together!)

4/12/78- B. reports on the instant success of A2N, J. reads a telegram of congrats from Alta Coma Mayor Frank Blecher...BABY IRENE has a preview of her Viva La Vegas revue. Sings "Isn't She Lovely" and does a tap. She has now moved out to California from Fernwood, got a beach house in Malibu, sent her mother back to Fernwood, and will do a 3-pic package ("The script is marvelous, but literally cries for Bill Bixby.")... CALVIN PROCTOR, the new head of the Hanzel and Gretel Day Care Center in Alta Coma. A photo report reveals that he has changed it into a child-labor sweat shop, B. accuses him, and Proctor replies with: "There is a difference, Mr. Barth, those kids (referring to the sweat shops of the 20's) were getting paid."...GEORGE GOBEL, who asks for people to call in with questions. No one does. HAPPY KYNE comes over and explains his drug addiction, he got hooked on Vapo-Dip while in the hospital for his nostrilectomy. B. welcomes a new sponsor tothe show Party Time Hoof Sticks (where the only part they don't use is the antlers). GOBEL gets a call at last...it's his wife.

4/13/78- B. & J. reminesce about the trip over from Fernwood (in a bus)... In a video taped press conference, A2N is welcomed to Altacoma by celebs BURT LANCASTER, STEVE ALLEN, HARVEY KORMAN, MELISSA MANCHESTER, PETER FRAMPTON, ANDY WILLIAMS, PAUL LYNDE, MILTON BERLE ("I never miss your show. I never see it, so I never miss it." ... SALLY HAYS (wife of Steven) talks about her book and other projects capitalizing on her husband's execution. B. explains the "I want to throw the switch because" contest and reads the letters from the winners.

4/14/78- ELECTROCUTION NIGHT '78
Bill Nickerson, the UBS program director (actually Marshall Efron) introduces the show. B. explains the concept of a "ratings pie" (with different age groups) using a real pie slapped up against a wall chart by good ol' Jerry... JOANIE KYNE, Happy's niece is reunited with him, but Happy is distraut because she has changed quite a bit over the years (she is now a candidate for a female Johnny Rotten)...PHYLLIS DILLER appears, B. sends her out to get sandwiches and coffee. The countdown for the Execution of Steven Hays commences, but at the last minute they get a call from the governor (Jerry: "You mean a reprieve?" Barth:"NO, they're still going to kill him, they just won't let us show it.")

4/17/78- B. comments on the movie scandals in Hollywood ("There's a certain percentage of people in Winnotchie, Washington who will rob you blind and sell your mother into white slavery. And in Hollywood, there's the same percentage of people, except that nobody cares about Winnotchie, Washington.")... The paper artistry of Mrs. PEARL WINDGATE (she sings "Tie a Yellow Ribbon" while tearing paper), she tell the History of Paper, B. gets bored...RITA MORENO is going to appear, but someone stole her costume, she has nothing on, and has to be interviewed through a crack in her dressing room door (J. tries to peek in, of course)...CHAD BRANDON, a young looking old-actor who stays fit through cosmetic surgery...RITA MORENO does a song through tce door...CHAD passes out, but doesn't die or anything.

4/18/78- B. has an idea for a sit com--FOR GOD'S SAKE it's called, where B. plays God, and each week, Jerry plays a person who doesn't believe in him("To convince him that I'm God, some weeks I'll give him, say a million dollars, and other weeks, less.") Jerry explains his idea for a show about a car mechanic (each week he has a different

AMERICA 2-NIGHT INDEX (continued)
by Bill-Dale Marcinko

problem with a car) starring Vince Edwards (B: "But isn't that along the lines of your WIDE WORLD OF SEWING, the Sunday afternoon show for the women?)...B. tells about the WIN A DATE WITH KAREN LYNN GORNEY CONTEST (the proceeds go to STY, or Short Tempered Youth, the group Taters the Clown is in charge of) and introduces Karen (Who is the most un-funny person on that show) and the winner, JEREMY MOORE and his dog Jeremy ("I couldn't think of a name"). Happy serves them dinner from his TACO AND RUN Restaurant. WE find out that Jeremy is a professional "winner" (he enters all the contests)...Happy does his version of the disco hit "Love Machine" with the Mirth-Makers, JEREMY and KAREN dance silently with a radio in their ears.

4/19/78- B. introduces some of the "little" people at UBS (secretaries, messengers, etc.) "Here at UBS we like to be personal and friendly, which is the ABC way, but we don't have our own "way" yet."...TONY AND JENNY DIPRONTO do a car commercial. Barth asks Tony to give him a car right on the air... JASON SHINE, a professional'escort', appears with his much older date (J. thinks it's his mother, of course) and talks about his profession and how he got into it ("I couldn't hold a regular job, you miss 4, 5 days in a row and they get really bummed out.")...BARBARA FELDON, who talks about women's roles on tv, mentioning some of her own. J. & B. ask only about the male stars she played with, i.e. her and Darren McGavin were on THE NURSES, B. asks only about McGavin. Jerry mentions THE NIGHT STALKER.

4/20/78- B. mentions the "best lube and oil change" at Bob & Bill's Disco-Gas ("I should mention, if you're crazy, that the'disco' signifies discount, and not discoteque.") B. also announces plans for A2N to go on the road, offers a contest to towns harboring A2N on their 'tour.'...BUCK & HARRIET PINE talk about the success of the Pine Family Singers, which is due to inbreeding ("We had to take Joanie Lynn out of school 'cause of all the teasing. She don't have no hair on her entire body. She ain't got no hair in her nostrils, and the cold air shoots right up her head and into her brain. Then there's Charlie Ray, with the high pitched voice. He's got two little breasts on him, just like his sister.") Jerry starts on moronic name puzzles (J: "If Joanie Lynn Pine married Forrest Tucker, she'd be..." B: "Joanie Lynn Tucker. And if she married Jerry Hubbard, she'd be what? Crazy.") SUSAN CLOUD appears, she has come out from Fernwood because her guru turned out to be "pretty raunchy." ("I was so uptight, I sold his mantra to the National Enquirer. I don't know what that'll do to my karma.") closed down the Butterfly Deli in Fernwood ("I had to buy doors and everything.") and will be opening the Butterly Disco in Altacoma. ('Cause music is far out. And dancing is a short trip,too. Sometimes I dance and there's no music. Your ears need something to listen to or otherwise they'd be lips.") Susan also thinks she's pregnant, isn't getting married ("I don't think you should complicate your life when you're pregnant.")

*4/21/78- I was at the Rocky Horror Picture Show. Heard it was pretty good. VINCENT PRICE was on, and Happy Kyne sang "Don't Leave Me This Way."

4/24/78- B. helps us adjust the color on our sets. ("Some guest we've carefully mad up to look normal has purple hair and gree nostrils. That may be ok for you drug use THE ANGEL STRING QUARTET, a revamping of the new classical program on UBS...Jerry t to get a fly to stay on the cream cheese. (B: "It's amazing how little they eat. He can fill himself up and there's still plent left for a real snack.")...LARRY GUY, the DJ with his confidence and poise course for clergy, shows a before and after clip of o of his students...ANNE MURRAY lip-syncs a recording of her "Snow Bird", but it turns out to be by Jerry Vale, too fast, etc. Finally they get it right, and B. and the audience join in on a lip-sync-along.

4/25/78- B. complains about the post office because he believes his invitations to big Hollywood parties are being lost in transit (B:"I'd rather have my mail delivered by LOckheed than ride in a plane build by the Post Office. Think about that.") He also tells people who send greeting cards to hi to sign it in pencil so he can use them again... They double up the talent by showcasing two acts simultanteously, TERESA GOMEZ (who sings), and THE FOOT BROTHERS (who dance, of course, did I have to tell you that?) B. and J. interview them simultaneously...MAHARESHI MAHESH MANGAPOO an Indian (not the American kind) with a weight loss program from his book "I'm Ok, You're Fat" (Jerry starts talking about American Indians, Barth apologizes with "Pardon my friend here, he went on a diet and lost his mind.") The Mahereshi suggests a few weight loss mantras (GOFATGETAWAYGET AWAY) (BOOSTRETCHMARKSBOOSTRETCHMARKS)... LOU MOFFET, the Consumer Advocate damns fraudulent songwriting programs (Lou: "I not only stay up on the law, but I try to stay one step ahead of it") and, of course, offers his own, honest (available, of course, from Gimbleco West).

4/26/78- THE ANNUAL UBIE AWARDS, B. & J. read the winners, some of them: BEST DOCUMENTARY- "In House, Outhouse", director: Benno Milsapp, BEST DRAMATIC SHOW IN COLOR: "The Pudgy Morgan Show" director: Benno Milsapp. BEST SPECIAL PROGRAM 90 MINUTES OR LONGER- "Beno Milsapp: The Man Behind The Camera" producer: Pudgy Morgan. WORST SIT COM OF THE YEAR: "Goofball Navy" (Jerry' favorite show, Mull breaks up a number of times while they are talking about it)... BRANDY McCALLISTER on the WORKLOAD segment. She's an out of work magician's assistant, and she demonstrates her skills (without a magician, yes)...EMMANUEL KAZINSKI, with his Olympic program for psychotic patients. They're training a woman who'lost her mind' through marijuana ("We're using her for the swimming. She can hold a deep breath for a incredible amount of time")...VICKI CARR talks about her career and Spanish accent ("Id lay brick and asphalt before I'd lay anything else, 'cause I'm a contractor's daughter.") And VICKI sings the National Anthem (it's the only song her and Happy know)

4/27/78- B. has "fun" with pet peeves (I'l do the talking and you'll have the fun")-- the phone company, the national anthem befo baseball games ("They didn't do that until after WW2, and that was just to find the Japanese spies. They were the ones who didn't stand up, or at least didn't appear

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5/9/78-(continued) and how insulting it is to his intelligence ("It's like they think you'll forget the name, or something." B: "What is the name?" J:"I can't remember") MISS PHYLLIS WOLFE is a psychic who communicates with Cole Porter.Jerry thinks she's talking about dead "sidekicks" and starts rattling off some names. (J: "We're talking about dead sidekicks, right?" B: "No, but what a hell of an idea..") PHYLLIS has a new album, PHYLLIS WOLFE SINGS SONGS COLE PORTER DIDN'T HAVE TIME TO WRITE...ROB REINER appears to quell rumors that ALL IN THE FAMILY went off the air because he and Jean Stapleton were having an affair... DR. RICHARD OSGOOD VAN MOOT (the leisure suits cause cancer doctor who has tacked "Van Moot" to the end of his name for no apparent reason) is concerned about the problems of the poor, and tells how the most precious commodity of the ghetto (the rat).can be used. They talk about rat corrals and breeding rats, and Jerry starts singing Western songs.

*5/10/78- PETER MARSHALL, DAVID FAIRCHILD discusses how to fight fright.

5/11/78- TWIGGY is supposed to be their special guest, but GENE of GENE'S LIMO SERVICE won't deliver Twiggy unless B. pays up the bill. They try to raise $50, and take up a collection in the audience...GAYLORD & HOLLIDAY sing... DR. WENDALL DELLERTON a pro-sugar campaigner, says his studies have found that sugar is good for you ("It gives you energy"), and explains his whole line of dental hygiene products, Dr. Goober's Chocolate Toothpaste, etc...The audience gives more than enough for Twiggy, B. sticks the remainder in his sock, and J. discovers it, B. explains it is for the children at the orphanage ("I put it down here real low, so they can just grab it. I call it SOCK-IT-To-ME, it's a little game we play.") TWIGGY comes on and doesn't talk about modeling (I'm sick of people asking me that question) but sings a normal song, FALLEN IDOL (which is not bad).

*5/12/78- Friday's seem to be bad days for me. Hey, don't blame me, I happen to have a social life, not like some of you. Anyway, GAYLORD & HOLLIDAY return, as does JUDGE MARSHALL PETTY, with real life person JACK JONES, who sings. B. also offers to manage the career of Leon Spinks.

*5/15/78- Arthur Zaprinski, an authority on Russia. Actress SUZANNE SELLERS.

*5/16/78- ROGER MILLER, Former gangster Mario Doresett.

*5/17/78- A bad week, as you can see. I was at college taking drugs or something (this was the last week of college, and you can check on that if you don't believe me). I don't even have listings for this day, that is how bad it was (the New York station had a soccer game on or something, and they pre empted the show.

*5/18/78- ARTE JOHNSON, SUSAN CLOUD (damn!)

5/19/78- B. tells how he got his furniture back from the Fernwood County Home for Children of the Criminally Insane. It burned to the ground, but he ran in and rescued his furniture. ("And if any of you kids are watching, be careful, your parents are crazy.") TONY ROLLETTI, tribute to Elvis, sings "The King Is Gone".B & J. make jokes about his toupee...ALICE GHOSTLEY tells about "Reality World" an amusement park for adults with "real pain" (Bumper Cars which go 40 m.p.h., etc.)

5/22/78- B. tells about his PR man, Mr. Jack Golfman, the only PR man who takes Master Charge, reads a clipping he wrote for Earl Wilson (because they weren't sure whether he was dead or not) with Barth Gimble Sez; and everything...EL TIJO 4, four brothers and sisters who murdered gobs of people when they were part of the Satanic cult, Children of Beelzebub, demonstrate a number from the prison's new rehabilitation program (auto shop, and musical comedy, they chose musical comedy)... Happy ran into Carol Burnett, who felt sorry for him with his artificial nostril (he was going to the doctor's to have it 'cleaned') And Happy brings CAROL BURNETT on the show and puts blinders on B. & J. and makes them guess who it is. Carol gets offended when they don't guess, and leaves in a snit, with the studio mike on her dress; so they turn it back on, and we hear her comment on B. & J. in her limo)

5/23/78- B. complains because he couldn't get free tickets to the Dodgers game. Seems they only give them out to sports writers, and not big name television personalities. AGENT'S CORNER features a former priest turned singer, TOM BILLINGHAM (B: "What ever made you want to leave the priesthood?") ...JUDGE MARSHALL PETTY talks about licensing prostitutes, shows B.& J. examples of a prostitution licenses (with photos). B. asks to keep his for "a friend" who would be interested in that kind of thing...MARK HAMILL, in an incredibly funny bit (for the celebs, who usually aren't that funny) talks about his idea for a tv series about a boy raised by pigs.

*5/24/78- Have mercy, it was my birthday. I celebrated. Mortician ERNEST TWILLY and Actrees GLORIA CHAMBERS appeared on this one.

5/25/78- THE TONY ROLETTI WEDDING, direct from the Pump Room of the Coma Cabana Inn. Tony weds singing waitress Joanie Sherwood (Judy Kahan, "Penny" from FERNWOOD, and also current co-star of FREE COUNTRY, with Rob Reiner) TOM WAITS (*SPECIAL*GUEST*STAR*) appears, Tony sings "You Light Up My Life", RABBI "SHECKY" STEIN officiates. Tony and Joanie sing their vows. But they run out of time, and they can't consummate their marraige because the wedding reception will be tomorrow. They spend the night in seperate hotel rooms.

5/26/78- THE TONY ROLETTI WEDDING RECEPTION same cast as 5/25/78, they show a film clip from the wedding.

*5/29/78- McLEAN STEVENSON appeared, I have no other info.

5/30/78- B. explains how he strolled the streets, checking the alleged police crackdown of prostitution on Hollywood Blvd. J. tells about how he and happy went to this disco, ALL THE KING'S MEN, where "there were no women. Just men, dancing with each other" and gave Barth's home phone number to one of the guys. A nice touch, J. mentioned the whole juke-box of only Judy Garland songs. SHARE THE STAGE segment of the show in which two acts are showcased at the same time.

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4/27/78 (cont'd) to be standing.") J. speaks out against sidewalk ramps for the handicapped (which he insists are skateboard ramps) When B. explains, J. can't understand ("Well, that makes even less sense. Why would they want the handicapped to go skateboarding?")... PHAROAH FAWCETT AND THE SPHINXES sing "Buried Alive" and unwrap themselves... Police Officer NORMAN BATALLO introduces a Mr. Potato Head (Inspector Spud, he calls him) which the Altacoma police force is using to aid witnesses in identifying criminal suspects. He shows some potato heads with likenesses of famous people's faces, like-- Nixon, Charles Manson, Ruben Hurricane Carter (since he's black, they use an egg plant instead of a potato). B: "I hate to tell you how to do your job, but that is not a potato."OFFICER:"When you're fighting crime, you have to use any vegetable at your disposal." ...SHERMAN HEMSLEY visits, takes a lie detector test while they are interviewing him, revealing all his insincere answers (the detector buzzes).

*4/28/78- NORMAN FELL, Parking Attendant WINNIE JACKSON ("I don't park 'em, I jes point to the spaces."), SUE BETTY DECKER discussing hiring practices.

5/1/78- B. tells us about his Quiet Evening At Home With Barth Gimble. TOMMY & TINA, the country cousins, sing. Tommy (about age 7) explains that he wants to "make enough money from television to go to medical school. We believe that television offers superficial entertainment and glorifies the mediocre." Barth: "Don't you think you are making blanket generalizations?" Tommy: "NO take you, for example. I'm sure you're as good as you are capable of being."...Jerry talks about FRONTAL NUDITY HOUSE PARTY on Cable Tv at 2:30 in the morning...MRS. IRENE HUDDLESTON warns us about the sexiest, most violent book in the world- THE BIBLE. and shows us what she has done to clean it up. ("In our book, all our births are by immaculate conception. We figure if they buy that story once...")...THIS IS YOUR LIFE, JIM NABORS, where Jim appears with insignificant people from his past that he can't remember, including Winnie Jackson, the parking lot attendant from 4/28/78.

5/2/78- B. wants a charity, so he adopts a child, a little black boy, WAYNE COLEMAN. Encourages the audience to write to the Adoption Board ("They want credit records, W-2 Forms, and I ask you, what does that have to do with being a father?")...AGENT'S CORNER features WAYNE COLEMAN, who sings "I Love You, Daddy" (which Barth wrote)... CINDY WILLIAMS answers questions, but just gives the answers (the questions are written on cards which she reads herself)...Program Director of UBS, BILL NICKERSON (Marshall Efron) appears, as does JEREMY MOORE who talks more about his strategies for winning at contests.

5/3/78- B. talks about Suzanne Somers and her interview with the Star, wants the Star to interview him to quelch any rumors (which haven't started yet)...BENJAMIN CHURCH, a CIA agent who was involved with drug experiments, can't remember anything, starts reciting the plot of GOLDFINGER when asked about his career DR. CHESTER HUTCHISON, a dentist, and Nurs Francis are shown as Jill St. John is interviewed with cotton in her mouth. JILL has a toothache, and can't sing, but the dentist (DR. HUTCHISON) and his nurse sugg they sing instead...JILL ST. JOHN comes on and talks about National Safety Month (real bombs), and the Dentist sings anyway.

5/4/78- Audience warm-up with Jerry is sho ...JUDY & JANET BAKER are girls who have joined the boy's wrestling team at Dwight D. Eisenhower school (Altacoma's high schoo Barth: "I think the question on all our min right now, is, what did you think of Eisenhower as a president?"...AMERICA AFTER LUN with host Wayne Coleman (as a miniature Bar Gimble)--Great! A children's version of A2N, complete with guests...WILLIAM W.D. "BUD" PRIZE and EDITH BUSH, has a new chinodonic device from Cletis Emmett Wheelwhelker, and raves on about his research into "people from way out, deep outer space" and "Flying Colanders" Blasts Stevie Spielberg for his CLOSED UP ENCOUNTER OF THE THIRD KIND: "He's got them way out outer space people with these great big head and got them flying around in "chandlerears" when we know that their space ve-hicles are shaped like flying colanders. The Bibl says we were made in the Maker's image, not Humpty Dumpty's.

5/5/78- They read from the script of FOR GOD'S SAKE, Barth's idea for a new situatio comedy, Barth plays God, Jerry plays Stanley Drinkbottom, and B. proves his existence by making Drinkbottom's pants fall down... The SINGING BIRD SISTERS don't show up, so Happy sings "Help Me, Rhonda" (a classic)... DR. STANLEY TURNBALL (who did the classic Home Test for Mental Illness on F2N) plugs his new book WINNING THROUGH ACTING CRAZY, shows a way to get in the front of the line at a supermarket, by putting cigarettes up your nose and in your ears, and asking people for a light ("They ask the person in front of them, cause they don't want to talk to a crazy person, and before you know it, you're at the frontof the line.") He also demonstrates his sales technique for th book (by pulling a gun on Barth)...ABE VIGOD who is interviewed, but the research department gives them all the wrong questio to ask. Abe does a little tap, and jogs in place for everyone.

5/8/78- B. talks about Phil Donahue, and how B. never got considered for THE TODAY SHOW...ELKE SOMMER is across the studio filming an episode with our own Taters the Clown, comes over in a clown suit, Jerry, thinking she's Swedish (she's German) talks to her in an awful Swedish accent, and start talking about Ingmar Bergman and Fellini and Ingrid Bergman... GENERAL FROM SOUTH AMERICA (I couldn't get the name and I'm not likely to try it, I took Russian in high school) is here to encourage Hollywood producers to make movies in his country. B. asks hard-hitting questions about torture in prisons. ...a commercial for THE RELATIVES...MUSCLE FLEXERS, 3 semi-finalists in the QUAD CITY MUSCLE BUILDING CONTEST, show their stuff... ELKE SOMMER sings "Nobody Does It Better"

5/9/78- B. tries out for a commercial, and tells us about it. It's for the CALIFORNIA YAM COUNCIL, and he had to dress in a yam suit ("I approached it seriously, like a Tennessee Williams character") Jerry talks about a commercial for something that they keep repeating over and over and over and o

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5/30/78 (cont'd) ERNEST MULDOON sings "Joy To the World" while MISS SUSAN WALCHUCK has for us a demonstration of martial arts...Jerry reveals he put Happy's hairpiece in the dryer...a commercial for JEAN'S HOUSE OF CAKES-- featuring funeral cakes formed in a replica of the deceased. DR. CARL CYRUS, an anthropologist who discusses the custom of yet another just discovered primitive tribe (B: "These people make Jerry sound smart.") and how they taught them the ways of civilization ("They didn't even know how to sit down.")

5/31/78- B. leaves the Altacoma Breakers Hotel, and makes a plea for a home under $12,000 that he can have...RONNIE MARTIN, who is deaf, does a comedy routine in deaf sign language with "Arnold the Alligator" while Barth and Jerry read'for those people not fortunate to be deaf.' ...MOURY JOHNSON who traced down his real parents, found his mother was a Polish cleaning woman, and his father was Adolph Hitler, warns adopted children not to seek out their real parents because of the consequences... WANDA FLEMING, a member of the Woodstock generation, complete with flowers, who tells how she marched all the way to Woodstock on a plane ("But I was marching up and down the aisles..."), and talks about school reforms, i.e. busing by astrological sign...Barth gets gum stuck on his sweater (gum, of course, he stuck somewhere himself).

6/1/78- B. buys a mobile home, the EL TIJO HALF-TOE BALLET CO.(composed entirely of housewifes who enact poignant suburbial traumas) do the Dance of the Femma Surburbia (going shopping, putting the groceries in the station wagon, etc.)...WILLIAM W.D. "BUD" PRIZE, After seeing the movie "San Francisco" Bud gets worried about earthquakes, brings in a 'scaled' model into illustrate his plan for pounding gigantic nails into the earth's crust...WENDELL DELLERTON also appears.

6/2/78- B. discusses disability pensions for politicians with stressful jobs, suggests that talk show hosts should be eligible for same type of pension... JIMMY YEN, sings "A Boy Named Sue (Su?", you see, he's Japanese, dressed in a cowboy hat, etc... BARBI BENTON, B. & J. attempt a Life Achievement Tribute to her (it was the only way they could get her to appear on the show, to give her an award). J. narrates some slides which have nothing to do with her life, well, not really nothing, because Jerry manages to make sense in his own senseless way...LOU MOFFET shows us his line of Bible Gum Cards--Terrific!

6/5/78- B. wants to help out someone who "lost their car keys", so he gets everyone to stand up at the beginning of the show while we's on and light candles ("It's dark up there"). ...Jerry and Happy do a program they did for the schoolchildren in elementary school (General R.W. Ungerwitter's kid was in the class, and he decided it would be a good idea) called I AM DEMOCRACY...They welcome TOM CATMAN WILSON who sounds like a black man, but isn't. They ask him if black people get angry with him because of the way he talks...BILLY CRYSTAL participates in a phore-in sponsored by Nixon's Laundry ("If we can't get it clean, it ain't dirty), and the moron who always calls on the phone talks to him.

6/6/78- B. welcomes DENNY & BRIAN, THE BORN AGAIN SURFERS, who were saved when "God" called out to them: 'You're too close to the pier. Please maintain a 50 foot distance from the pier.' Barth maintains it was a lifeguard with a bullhorn, J. can't understand why God would need a bullhorn, and the Born Again Surfers retain their belief...Jerry & Happy start fighting over the bathroom. (They are rooming together at a motel room in the Marina Del Coma)...DR. JOYCE BROTHERS appears, talks about their roommate problems ("It's very hard living together. Because you don't have the sex to make up with." Jerry: "That's for sure! That's for sure!"), the significance of the name Marina Del Coma, and bachelorhood... MONEY TALKS-- VERN TAYLOR (UNCLE SAM, JR.) pays money this time, to talk about the portrayal of violence on television ("Violence can get very physical. What they don't show is that when you get shot in the chest, your buns get blown off against the wall; when a guy punches you in the face your teeth break off, and your eyes hang out of their sockets going BOOGALA BOOGALA; and STAR WARS, they should call it FAKE WARS or STAR SISSIES, get some World War II newsreels, then you'll see violence, get the networks to put on some shows where the kids see some arms flying and some feet turning green. The only nice thing about STAR WARS was the music. It had a lot of trumpets, and trumpets mean war to me.") VERN does a trumpet solo of Star Wars Theme.

6/7/78- B. explains how he sold stock in himself back in Fernwood, and how the three guests he had on appeared that morning demanding their money (well, four with VERN TAYLOR, but he was already in Alta Coma for a gun convention). They each tell a bit what has been happening with them, and ask what has happened to their money. They include: CANDY LEE HARGROVE, from the Fascinating FEmales of Fernwood, CONNIE BUSHMAN, from the Fernwood Pet Control Center. She brought Happy's pet turtle Timmy out with her, and invites Happy over to give it to him. But the turtle is dead. Happy is struck, and Connie explains her counseling service for grieving pet owners. ...MERCEDES BLYWEISS, the president of the Barth Gimble Fan Club, presents Barth with a piece (used) of Barth Gimble Gum...VERN TAYLOR talks about Germans and Volkswagens and how they are still trying to take over the world, and does a horn number ("All MY Lovin') with Candy Lee Hargrove on tap.

*6/8/78- I was out having sex, couldn't get back in time to catch this show . All I know is it had MELISSA MANCHESTER on it.

6/9/78- B. updates us on FOR GOD'S SAKE, now called FOR PETE'S SAKE (where he's St. Peter) "They didn't like the 'God' angle." ...Happy joins some stupid UKRANIAN DANCING GROUP (mostly kids) for some Ukranian dancing. ...MR. TED JENNINGS, explains his free-lance swat team, Econo-Swat, the Party Swat Team (if someone is playing their stereo too loud, they smoke them out, except for kid's parties, which they have to break down the door for, 'cause the room's filled with smoke to begin with, and Motel Flushing, where they descend on husbands whose wives suspect them of cheating...BELLA ABZUG is interviewed, with J. asking questions like "Do you do your own typing?" Bella is no fun, but B.+J. make it work.

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6/12/78- B. makes another plug for a ransom fund account (in case he is ever kidnapped)... commercial for JEAN'S HOUSE OF CAKES, featuring Feminist Cakes...CARD REINER visits, suggests that he would make a good substitute host, B. gets worried, General Ungerwitter likes the idea, calls up on B.'s phone, and wants to see CARL REINER host... After the commercial, (a real commercial), CARL is host.

6/13/78- B. complains about how there is no tour bus to the UBS Mall...ROBERT CONRAD,comes on,is injured from a stunt he did ("Yes, I do all my own stunts. I love all sports."), shows B. & J. how he got injured by diving onto Barth's couch. They try to interview him,b ut he goes to sleep, because they gave him drugs for the injury (B: "He didn't get anything from our guy here at the studio? Mr. Needles, they call him.")...VIRGIL SIMMS discusses his mobile home accident, and sings "Just Give Me A Phone Booth in Heaven." ... TATERS THE CLOWN appears on tape with his "Spelling Song" (J: "There is a silver cloud to this lining.") Taters is great. "Who's your favorite clown?" One of the kids answer: "Chevy Chase." Taters comes back with: "How many of your parents are alcoholics? The rest of you are probably just kidding." He does the "Taters Spelling Song" --I hope you kids can come along/And sing the Taters Spelling Song/Let's all spell the way you look/That's U-G-L-Y, ugly (the kids then repeat the line)/Let's all spell how smart you are/ That's D-U-M-B, dumb/ U-G-L-Y, D-U-M-B, that's you...(B: "Taters has a rough job, it's hard to make a 5-year old mind pay attention. Jerry?" J: "What did you say?")...TATERS THE CLOWN appears in person, reveals he will hold a carnival for S.T.Y. (Short Tempered Youth) (Taters: "It breaks my heart to see this short tempered kids grow up to become full-fledged sadists, and have to settle for jobs as football coaches and prison guards.")

6/14/78- B. shows prizes and yells $10,000!! to get audience excited (they don't give anything away, but B . figured that the show could use it, since they were up against a lot of game shows)...PUNK MONKS sing "Karmic Love" (Jerry thinks they are saying "comic books" when they sings about buying their "karmic books") and talk about their cause ("We try to spread our love in the most disgusting way possible.")...Happy Kyne talks about his special home dental service...B. sings a lip-sync number to a Martin Mull song ("I found this fine new artist.")-- does "I'll Do the Samba, While You March Along"

6/15/78- B. announces his plans to issue his memoirs, "Barth Gimble--OneMan, One Life" and says instead of dictating his memoirs into a tape recorder and calling in a ghost writer, B. will issue his memoirs on tape (no refunds), available from Gimbelco Enterprises...the EL TIJO HALF TOE BALLET COMPANY do the Ballad Of the Broken Station Wagon, B. & J. narrate the proceedings, but get involved in talking about cars and forget about the ballet...DR. RICHARD OSGOOD VAN MOOT discusses the organ black market, and his solution, the whole body parts catalog. (J: "Look, here's an elbow, and here..." B: "Jerry, we know you know the difference.")...a commercial for SAY WHAT! a new black comedy on UBS, in which Oscar, King, and Suger Hat wash an old man who is waiting at a car wash. Fo sure! Fo sure!...B. makes a plea to our Arab friends to buy shows from UBS, and gives us a few examples.

6/16/78- THE DIVORCE OF TONY ROLETTI, with Rabbi "Shecky" Stein doing the honors. Tony is there, but Joanie Sherwood, the singing waitress, does not appear.

6/19/78- B. speaks out against people on tv who aren't experienced television personalities (doctors, football players) and how this trend only goes in one directio ("You don't see talk show hosts opening up an eye, ear, nose, and throat practice.") ...BABY IRENE sings, and reveals she has a boyfriend (Jerry starts chanting in a sing song voice, 'Irene's got a boyfriend, Irene's got a boyfriend.' Baby Irene turns to Barth, and says "Isn't he immature?")... SUSAN CLOUD brings in some sugar substitute to kill the rats in the studio ("They either die or become pregnant.") and tells about her new scheme, Falaffle Huts (the spelling on this is off, I know, but I've never written the god-damned word before, said it plenty of times)...a commercial for the BOUNCING SQUAD, an episode where the midget clown makes the three girls put on their t-shirts and jump up and down for an hour...B. goes to introduce GENERAL D. W. UNGERWITTER, the president of the UBS Network (and Barth's boss, natch), but forg his name. The GENERAL comes on and reveals plans to stay open during a nuclear attack, and chooses America 2-Night as the show tha will broadcast during the holocaust.

6/20/78- B. describes a new show for the fall season on UBS-- a show which will run every night, every hour, for 3 full weeks. It is a "panorama of man's cruelty to every racial and religious minority in history" called HATE '78, featuring a family whose members each of whom is a minority of a different racial or religious group, and each of whom will be featured in "at least one hour of terrible suffering" One of my favorites is a Bangladeshi half-sister who quietly starves to death during the entire program. Barth claims it makes ROOTS look like CAR WASH and HOLOCAUST loo the THE SANDY DUNCAN SHOW...J. reveals he and Happy got the job an the Yam commercial B. tried out for, After B. discovers they'l be getting $3,000 plus residuals, he sulks while Happy and Jerry do the actual Yam commercial...VIRGIL SIMMS reveals his plan for a Mobile City, a city in which all the buildings and structures in the town are o wheels. He even brings a model, but all the things roll off of it...B. introduces a clip from the DAVID JOHN DECKER SHOW, which is on UBS from 2 am-5 am. Harry Shearer does a brilliant Tom Snyder impersonation in which he rambles on about the Vaughn Fraser Fan Club, and a transsexual he has on the show that night... VIRGIL SIMMS sings "You Folded Up My Heart (At the Big T Laundermat)...Jerry has to go to the bathroom, but there's no zipper in his Yam costume (which, by the way, he had on during the whole show), and he has an accident. Barth comes out of his bad mood immediately.

*6/21/78-- The Baseball game on Channel 9 in New York ran long, but this featured JACK ALBERTSON in a 24-minute telethon, if you can believe TV Guide.

AMERICA 2-NIGHT INDEX (continued)
by Bill-Dale Marcinko

6/22/78- B. explains the presence of two policemen behind him("They are not from SPACE COPS, the only show on UBS to be cancelled in mid-show). They are there to keep the Mirth-Makers off the premises. They have union problems, and Happy is all alone on the show this night. J. tells about Danny Dixon, a local resident who robbed the bank where he had an account for 10 years, and gets caught, but is set free because "who would rob a bank where you had an account for 10 years?"...BARBARA EDEN and MELISSA GILBERT (the girl from Little House on the Prairie) are doubled up and interviewed simultaneously(this was done previously with two "fake" guests) ...Since Melissa explains that she is supposed to have a tutor on the set, B. helps out by asking every other question like what is the capitol of Tanzinia. J. asks her about the chief export of Honduras (bananas, if you care) On the Golden Anniversary--50 Weeks of Broadcasting show (see 7/3/78) there is an excerpt from this scene, except the excerpt was edited out. J. evens refers to that. It has to do with the$64,000 Question and how he didn't know the answer to who was buried in Grant's Tomb, because he's not into politics. Enough trivia, I'm sounding like Mark Gruenwald...Happy comes over when Barbara starts talking about quitting smoking, and H. tells about how he thinks his band is smoking "reefer sticks" and shows the "Oral Smoke Alarm" for people who want to quit smoking. It is installed on the roof of the mouth of the smoker. He puts one on Barbara Eden and can't shut it off...B. explains about how CHUCK EMMETT SAUGUS went "beserk" in the UBS Mall, and how he has taken a girl (Mary Marie Clark) hostage. SAUGUS comes on the show with MARY MARIE CLARK to make his demands public. He wants a million dollars, a pair of $15 shoes, and Mary Marie wants some Captain Crunch. He says that everyone will stay in the studio all night or however long it takes until his demands are met. He lets MELISSA GILBERT leave, and BARBARA EDEN sings "Embraceable You".

6/23/78- STILL UNDER SIEGE, 24 HOURS LATER... The cast wakes up to do the show. SAUGUS changes his demands, wants a job instead, and to meet a "celebrity". So B. introduces LOUDON WAINWRIGHT III, who comes on with a box of Captain Crunch for Mary Marie, and does "Golfer's Blues" (from his album FINAL EXAM, reviewed in this issue-- what is this fool doing, plugs or something?)... SAUGUS gets a phone call and is offered a job in Oregon, and since he got the shoes from Happy Kyne (who is now walking around in socks), he is happy for the time being... DR. ARNOLD SMOLIUS (alledgedly from U. of Cal at Altatoona Beach) comes to talk about whale communication, but is really just a frustrated singer who is trying to get on tv. B. let's him sing, anyway, so he sings, "Tie A Yellow Ribbon Round the Old Oak Tree" (the second time someone has sung that song on the show) ...CHUCK EMMETT SAUGUS takes Loudon's shoes because they are a size 10 and fit better. Decides he wants a brown suit too, and Mary Marie wants a puppy. A cop comes in disguised as guest "Raquel Welch", but his disguise is discovered by Saugus (COP: "I told them, we should just bust in here and start shooting."). Jerry (of all people) saves everyone by getting cranky and grabbing the gun away from Saugus.

6/26/78- B. talks about his guests, who he suspects may be "actors just pretending to be guests." They have press agents and secretaries. B: "This show is not for a handful of 2nd and 3rd rate comedy school cronies who would flaunt their drug-induced antics on this stage!" As a gesture of ethicality, Barth fires all his staff, and gets a new one ("I had lunch with her today") ...MASTER FRANKIE WONDER, a 3-year old who sings "I Did It My Way", but when interviewed, doesn't say anything...MR. MONTY HALE soon to be host of UBS's "Friday Night Cowboy Movie Party"... LENNY & SQUIGGY (in character) do a love ballad from a horror movie (they didn't do the movie, just the song) called "The Creature Without A Head" ("Once I was so happy/My girl and I were one/Everything seemed okay/Until that summer night/When a radioactive cloud came down/ And absorbed her head away/We lay in the darkness in our secret place/She's got a great body/So who needs a face?")

6/27/78- B. talks about suggestions and gifts he's gotten from other people who have lived in mobile homes. J. tells a really inane story about looking in a horses mouth (which has the moral 'Don't cry over spilt milk.')...BIG TURKEY and SUPER QUACK stars of "Silly Barn", a children's show on UBS, perform...HERB MATTHEWS talks about the practical joke conspiracy in the Carter administration...JOAN RIVERS tells a few jokes, plugs her "Rabbit Test" movie (which is awful, don't see it), shows a clip from the movie (which isn't that funny), and gives B. a t-shirt to wear.

6/28/78- B. is absorbed in the L.A. Dodgers game during the whole show...TONY ROLETTI sings his special styling of "America the Beautiful"...Tony returns with an update of his act, this time doing an impersonation of Judy Garland---SUPERB!!! He does a tribute to the WIZARD OF OZ by reciting lines from the movie in the Judy Garland get up. (You can't imagine how funny this is unless you see it)...STEVE GARVEY, first baseman for the Dodgers talks a bit, and plays some softball with Barth, Jerry, and Happy. (J. offers him suggestions on his hitting), STEVE sprains his ankle...TONY ROLETTI comes back on with an impersonation of Dolly Parton.

6/29/78- B. speaks out against the regulation that prohibits advertising hard liquor on TV...KAREN BLACK is spotted in the audience, comes down, interviews herself and does a song with B. and Jerry...WILLIAM W.D. "BUD" PRIZE appears in his Uncle Sam chinodonic device, accompanied as usual by Edith Bush (who again insists she is not Amelia Earhart)...WILLIAM W.D."BUD" introduces his dance teacher, MISS BRENDA, from the Miss Brenda School of Dance & Charm, brings on some of the other students (they are going to have a recital, and they wanted to try out the act somewhere where it wouldn't matter much). B. & J. seeing what Miss Brenda looks like, join up, as Miss BRenda promises a treat for her best student.

6/30/78- B. talks about the 90 minute salute to GENERAL D.W. UNGERWITTER-- "Ungerwitter with a'U'"...MONEY TALKS features MARSHALL PETTY who proposes as a punishment

AMERICA 2-NIGHT (continued)
by Bill-Dale Marcinko

for white collar and Watergate offenders "one year of humiliation" ("Make them dress up like the clowns that they are, wear silly clothes, or at least show funny pictures of them") He does show some slides, of Dean, Haldeman, etc...SHARI LEWIS shows up, but Lambchop is stolen, and a caller (the same moron who always calls) is holding Lambchop for ransom...B. introduces VIRGIL SIMMS (J: "By the way, speaking of doing dangerous things in a mobile home, did they ever find out if that actress was over 18?" to Barth) Virgil talks about his accident with his mobile home jump (he set a Guiness record for land speed for a mobile home, at 223 m.p.h.) and shows photos. Virgil sings "I'm Swearing Off Of You, You Hag, You Hag."

THE LAST WEEK OF SHOWS
Coincidentally, the 4th of July weekend last year marked the premiere of Fernwood 2-Night. With 13 weeks (65 shows) of FERNWOOD 2-NIGHT, and 13 weeks of AMERICA 2-NIGHT, that's enough of a Happy Birthday America present for me. Now, I don't know if this show will continue at some future date. Norman Lear lost his shirt bringing the show back and he only did so because of the cult audience who swamped the stations with letters (ala Star Trek) and actually got the show back on the air, even though stations were dropping it right and left. Channel 48 here in Philadelphia is rerunning the shows, Channel 9 in New York isn't. I don't have any idea what kind of ratings this show got, but I figure if we did it once, we can do it again... So write to Norman Lear's Tandem Productions in Calif, (I'll get the address for those who are interested) and local station (or stations) which carried America 2-Night (or even Mary Hartman, Mary Hartman way back when) or, if you never got the show, write to all your local independent stations and ask them to pick it up (even at this late date). I'm gonna try to call California and get the word on America 2-Night for next issue. Does anyone know the fate of this show? If you hear anything, tell me right away.

7/3/78- In a truly superlative show, A2N is pre-empted tonight so that they could bring you UBS's GOLDEN ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION, commemorating the First 50 Weeks of Programming. ...THE SINGING BONDINIS from WELCOME BACK, CONMAN (a UBS Show)--in an incredibly funny satire of those awful tribute song production numbers...Barth is the master of ceremonies, introduces Jerry, J. explains that most UBS people will not be at this celebration, because of a bowling tournament (B: "I Love their slogan, off the streets and into the alleys.") J. speaks of Barth (J: And as the people at UBS were carving out a conspicuous niche in the entertainment industry, our own Barth Gimble could be said to be the most recent son of that niche.") Barth introduces the man responsible for these 50 weeks of "darned close to entertaining" programming. ...GENERAL D.W. UNGERWITTER talks about the state of "war" between UBS and the other 3 networks. "We're ragged and we're bloody, and we're in last place. But we're a strong last. You know why, UBS cares about good taste. I was watching one of them other networks the other night, and I saw this Chinese fellow kiss this white girl, and I damned near threw up. Some of our soldiers have fallen on the brutal sword of bad ratings." He reads a memorial role call of cancelled UBS shows...THREE IN THE BATHROOM, BEAVER HERB, LUNCHBOX LARRY, THE WHITE SUPREMACY HOUR, DENTIST ON WHEELS, THE WACKY LAUNDERMAT, THE LOVE PLANE, and FUN WITH GYNECOLOGY." ...LUNCHBOX LARRY who was in the audience walks out (it was the first time Larry found out about his cancellation)...J. introduces LOU RAWLS to help him introduce the nominees for awards, and J. starts in on a string of cliche jazz/negro terms "I know everything there is to know about rhythm and blues." The nominees for best performer is TATERS THE CLOWN (they play a tape of him asking the kids if their parents are alcoholics), JERRY (not Barth) from A2N; Barth takes it hard, runs offstage and starts drinking. TATERS wins, and reads some letters from his viewers (My dad hates you. He said he'd like to put a hand grenade in your mouth and pull the pin.") He has to be taken off...JOSE FELICIANO plays his mouth (making strange sounds) talks about Tacos, Happy, and playing the accordian (B: "We have Frankie over here, you're on Book 3 now, aren't you?") B. explains that much of the stockholder's money is invested in pork futures.

7/4/78- SPECIAL SALUTE TO SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA B. tells about his golden tan. Before he tells about being a 'blondie' and being called "pinkie" and peeling. His secrets-- why tan any part of the body that's not going to show? "You get your tan in the outfit you're planning to wear that night. You go straight from Mr. Sun to Miss Right. "And I guarantee that the only skin problem you'll have is chafed elbows." ... J. comes on riding a skateboard, J. tells us his idea about skateboards for the water "If they just took the wheels off, and made it larger, you could use it in the water." ...Happy does a medley of summer hits... J. talks about the differences between most surfers and Barth, and how he couldn't pass for one ("You'll have to wear long pants, because of those skinny legs of yours. Ihear you're suing your legs for non-support" ...DR. WENDELL HEALY, talks about the surfing customs of New Guineans (a mating ritual), with photos... CONNIE STEVENS comes on, Barth explains that this show is actually a pilot for a regular surfing series. Connie objects to the contract (which calls for her to pay Barth $10,000), Her agent calls up B. (B: "Yes, I do plan to work in this town again.")

7/5/78- B. says "I would say we've got a potentially award-winning show tonight, but we don't, we just have the same bunch of marginally talented people." B. objects to the Emmys, and suggests (and copyrights) the idea of The Academy of Talk Show Arts, or A.T.S.A. and awards ("Outstanding Achievement in Rendition of 'Feelings'); suggests they should be divided into two categories (1 hour or more- Johnny, Merv, Mike, Phil, Dinah, Jim Nabors, and 30 minutes or less, say, America 2-Night) talks about the establishment of a talk-show museum. Forsees the program to be the first awards program done "sitting down." TATERS THE CLOWN comes on and does'Taters' Counting Song' ("We all learned to count today, I've had enough, now go away.") B: "Why do those kids put up with you?" TATERS: "Stupidity, Barth. You can't believe how stupid these kids are!" B. mentio Taters' organization, the Ku Klux Klowns... DICK MARTIN helps out the Sisters of Pity General Hospital by putting his hand prints in a block of wet cement.

AMERICA 2-NIGHT (continued)

by Bill-Dale Marcinko

7/5/78 (cont'd)- B. asks how to get rid of a partner is "just so much excess baggage." Dick reveals you just let them fade away...DICK's back goes out, he gets stuck in the cement (which dries so he can't remove his hands)...FATHER JOHN LEWIS, the Director of Operations from the Mission Santia Wineries. Tries to help Dick on the couch (B: "Isn't it beautiful, the way the men come to each other's aid?") He reveals the cheap wine they have, which they produce in volume, available in a matter of weeks. Dick asks if he could try a bag. They show a commercial for the wine, available in six-packs, cartons, and jugs (which Dick got conned into doing)

7/6/78- B. complains because the Altacoma Chamber of Commerce gave their "Man of the Year" award to Rex Chambers, an insurance agent.("I've tried to put this town on the map for something other than the cheapest self-serve gas from Whittier to Hollywood") ...J. thinks it's unfair that B. is listed as an "ex-convict" and that he has to be taken down to the police station everytime a crime is committed...MASTER WAYNE COLEMAN, who is now host of AMERICA AFTER LUNCH (which is now a show on UBS) B: "But what's your idea of a 'big' guest? One of those midgets who walk around Disneyland in a mouse suit?" WAYNE: No, Barth we don't go for the aame guests you do." ...MRS. CHARLOTTE GODFREY explains how she was seduced by a Bigfoot ("It wasn't long till I found out what he wanted from me. I could tell by the direction from which he was pointing. The only thing I could do was ask him to be gentle with me, cause, Barth, it was bigger than the both of us. It was great fun, but it was just one of those things.") A segment of AMERICA AFTER LUNCH with TERRY BERGMAN (a miniature Jerry) and WAYNE COLEMAN. Their guest, ISABEL SANFORD. Wayne plugs Gene's Limo Service, Freda's Florist Shop. (ala Barth) Terry thinks she's from SANFORD AND SON (Isabel, in case you don't know, is Louise on the JEFFERSONS) A beautiful miniature version of AMERICA 2-NIGHT with Barth and Jerry. Isabel does a plug for the ISABEL SANFORD DATE BOOK (available from Coleman-co Enterprises)...CHARLOTTE shows a sock she made for Bigfoot...B. wants to interview Isabel, but Wayne has an exclusive contract with her for no other interviews (offers an interview if he is paid $5 a question).

*7/7/78- THE LAST SHOW. I am going to press with AFTA (because it has to be out this weekend) so I will not have seen this show yet. It will feature Barth andJerry, with special guest MARTIN MULL and FRED WILLARD (Through the use of a split-screen) J. discusses his resemblance to Fred.

ANALYSIS—F2N vs. A2N

This is hardly the definitive analysis I expected it to be. It will take the form of scattered shots more than anything else, a listing of the good and bad points of the re-vamped FERNWOOD 2-NIGHT which returned to tv in April as AMERICA 2-NIGHT. For a more detailed analysis see next issue's report on Martin Mull (How close is he to Barth?) the Barth Gimble put-down course, or last issues article on Fernwood 2-Night, for those of you who have AFTA #1 (and shame on you if you haven't).

The most obvious change is, of course, the name change. AMERICA 2-NIGHT. Kinda think they are going to bigger targets. Yeah. They still have the banal/hick town huckster type flavor of Fernwood in Altacoma. But here they also can have real life celebs come on the show (since Alta Coma is only 28.4 miles from Hollywood) more often without as Norman Lear put it,"have their tour bus break down in Fernwood, Ohio" This change (the addition of celebs) is at once the shows biggest flaw (only because the celebs aren't funny, and aren't sure what is going on-- should they be complete put-ons, ala,say Lenny and Squiggy (who never fell out of character) or Mark Hammill with his pigs, doing the routine dead-pan honest, or should they play themselves (Joan Rivers, in an absolutely abysmal appearance), getting outraged as they would if it was a real show? No one seems sure, the scriptwriters-- the celebs-- the only together person is Barth, who has to smooth over bombing celebs who are trying to be funny (I thought Jill St. John and Karen Lynn Gorney (from SATURDAY NIGHT FEVER) were really awful no matter what direction you come from) Speaking of Karen Lynn Gorney, Barth stuck a good one in at the end of the show (which no one noticed, when he commented supposedly in reference to Jeremy Moore's dog Jeremy, "Boy, I love having dogs on the show." Intentional or not, I enjoyed it.

There is something very interesting at work here though (perhaps unintentionally)-- what is real and what is not is called into question. What happens when you mix real life people who appear as themselves and fictional characters? (The people who write the show even like to do this, as one night Jerry (when reading the cast list) referred to "WILLIAM W.D. 'BUD' PRIZE" as appearing "as himself.") Your sense of reality is scattered, which is always nice for a change. This confuses many neos-- they don't understand how Mark Hamill could make a fool of himself, or in the case of my mother, think everyone on the show is real. Well, if Bella Abzug appeared on the show, why would she appear with actors and actresses playing parts? Like my mother, who thought TONY ROLETTI was a real singer. This makes for bad ratings, but much theoretical discussion about the nature of tv. Which I may go into next ish.

Some good points-- the idea of a fourth network with other shows and people on those shows (TATERS, LUNCHBOX LARRY, DAVID JOHN DECKER). This gives them the freedom to do commercials and to really run the institution of tv right through the grinder (as glancing over the index will indicate).

And the shows real strength-- the regulars, Barth (Martin Mull), Jerry (Fred Willard), Happy (Frank De Vol), and the guests Tony Roletti, William W.D. 'Bud' Prize, Susan Cloud, Marshall Petty, Vern Taylor, and the others-- polished, professional performers with a brilliant sense of ad lib and comedy timing. They make the show.

Mull, by the way, has told his concert audiences, that the show WILL RETURN in some form. He has volunteered to give up his salary for the show to keep it going.

it's...

A COLUMN OF MONTY PYTHON NEWS

1411 Cherokee Lane
Ottawa, IL 61350

by howard johnson

I've got so much material here I'm really not sure where to start. I supposed first of all, I'll start with last issue. The first It's was a bit muddled, which was really no one's fault--Bill Dale tried to update it (which it needed by the time he went to press), and consequently a few facts got jumbled in the process, facts which were corrected by none other than John Cleese.

John wrote, first of all, concerning MONTY PYTHON MEETS BEYOND THE FRINGE (a film version of the first Amnesty International benefit), "We were all thoroughly fed up to find some impressario in Washington passing it off as the new Monty Python film with all original material. They really don't care what they say provided they make a few bucks... There will probably be a FAWLTY TOWERS feature but at the moment Connie and I are struggling with the writing of seven more half hour shows for the BBC which we will make at the beginning of '79...The group was not offered the 39 shows a year deal. That was an offer for Fawlty Towers. As Connie and I had produced six in 7½ months we said we did not feel the figures quite worked out..."

I also received some kind letters from Eric Idle, Terry Jones and Michael Palin, portions of which are scattered about this column. Michael in particular really liked AFTA, called it great, and "loved the review of Jabberwocky--one of the best!"

Despite any and all rumors to the contrary, there will be one and only one new Python film this year, and it will begin shooting in September. It has been called by many titles, among which are The Gospel According to St. Brian (which I believe is now no longer useable), Monty Python's New Film, The Life of Brian, and Brian of Nazareth, among others. John Cleese said the writing of the film changed enormously by the time the script was completed in January, and now, "Brian is no longer a disciple, just a bloke in Judea in 33 A.D."

The reason for the delay in the film is that, as Terry Jones wrote, "the backers backed out just before the final contracts were to be signed...Suddenly left us with 3 weeks production under our belt which means 50,000 pounds already spent. The whole budget is around 2 million pounds." Some good news is that from all indications, they have probably got a backer now for the Brian film. Even if they get no backer, however, Michael told me that there will be a new Python film to begin shooting in September. It would cost much less to make, and would be a revue show along the lines of And Now For Something Completely Different.

Besides the new Python film, the individual members of the group are all keeping busy with various other projects. John Cleese is, of course, busy with Fawlty Towers. His T.V. film The Strange Case of the End of Civilization (As We Know It) in which he plays Arthur Sherlock Holmes, was shown on London Weekend Television around the end of 1977, and was shown over here on PBS this spring. John told me that Graham Chapman has "Just finished The Odd Job Man, but at the last moment an actor called David Jason took over Keith Moon's role."

The Rutles special, All You Need Is Cash, Eric Idle and Neil Innes' parody of the Beatles, was shown on NBC on March 22, and the Rutles booklet with the free enclosed record album soundtrack is selling well, both over here and in England. Eric wrote that it was "shown in England five days after the American airing and will be repeated in the autumn. It seems it will be released in the U.S. as a film (?!) and the album is selling really well...I'm working on a couple of secret projects." ("Sadly, I don't think a rerunning of the Rutles special will occur here in the States, due to the news that for that week, All You Need Is Cash, came in at 65th place in the Neilsens, which translates as dead last for the week. Just goes to show, that these Americans don't have taste." --B-D)

Following is part of a story that I pulled from the wires of United Press International..."Idle says the thing about the Beatles is that they're one of the few groups with a visual image--and everybody's familiar with them. He says they and the Rolling Stones are about the only groups like that, the only ones that would work for a parody."

"More than a year in the making, The Rutles grew out of Rutland Weekend Television, a half hour TV series Idle had in Britain after Monty Python had run its course."

"During that series, he worked with Neil Innes, a musician formerly with the comic-rock Bonzo Dog Band, who subsequently wrote original, Beatles-style music for the Rutles. The resulting soundtrack album is itself a put-on masterpiece."

"Since both Innes and Idle are a part of the band, the question naturally arises: Will the Rutles ever actually play any concerts?"

"'No,' said Idle. In his words, 'How could we? After all, we've been broken up for seven years.'"

If you've seen The Two Ronnies on PBS starring Ronnie Barker and Ronnie Corbett, you may have noticed the names of Michael Palin, Terry Jones, Eric Idle and John Cleese in the closing credits. John appeared on a few of the shows, reprising the "Three Classics" sketches they used to do on The Frost Report, with John being the upper class gentleman, and Corbett and Barker representing the middle and lower class. Michael, Terry, and I think Eric worked with the Two Ronnies on the Frost Report, and the two are using some material written for them in the Frost days, while Michael and Terry also contributed some original material later on.

Terry Jones and Michael Palin are, this summer, working on two more Rippling Yarns shows, which they will finish before starting on the film in September. Michael was also the guest host on NBC's Saturday Night, on what was definitely one of their better shows. ("This episode will be rerun on July 15 for those of you who missed it the first time." --B.D.)

While he was in New York, I got the chance to talk to him a few times, and he was kind enough to grant me an interview--a portion of which was conducted the Saturday morning of the show:

HOWARD: How is the show coming along?

MICHAEL: It's good fun, actually, very good fun, Howard.

IT'S... (continued)

HOWARD: You really like it?

MICHAEL: Yes, I like it a lot. The people are a great lot to work with, very nice. It's been a most pleasant week of work so far, but that may change as today becomes Madness Day. It's sort of like going into one of those tunnels they have at fairs, you never know what can happen throughout the day, you have all those things brushing against your face, and you feel very lucky to come out at the end, either better or worse for the experience. But anyway, you'll really see tonight. It's going to be a fun show from our point of view--whether it'll please the audience, I don't know...

HOWARD: The Rutles--I saw your bit in that, which was excellent--as was the entire production. I know you had a bit with George (Harrison), but I wondered if you had gotten the reactions of any of the other Beatles?

MICHAEL: Well, he (George) was quite happy with it, and from what I can gather there's been good reaction from everybody. It was a great production, it was good to do, actually. My part in it only took half a day, though.

That's a brief (very brief) portion of the interview, some other parts of it are scattered around this column. The entire interview (and much more) is available in the first volume of The Complate Monty Python, a zine no Python fan should be without. It contains everything you always wanted to know about Python--the TV shows, records, books, movies, individual profiles, a Python quiz, and lots of other fun stuff.

Do I know where you can get a copy? Funny you should ask...the first volume of The Complate Monty Python is available from myself for only $1.65, and a bargain at half the price (make those checks out to Kim Johnson, though-- my bank doesn't have that much of a sense of humor). For those who are interested, It's is strictly a column of Python news, while TCMP is devoted to everything else about Python, with occasional overlaps.

Well, that's all this time until next time, remember, support AFTA and buy The Complate Monty Python!

--Howard Johnson

1411 Cherokee Lane, Ottawa, IL 61350

("And if anyone sees any newspaper or magazine articles, or hears any mention in the media of Monty Python, (or for that matter, Fawlty Towers, 2 Ronnies, Holy Grail, the Rutles, or any other related endeavors), we would appreciate knowing about it, ok? Again, I urge you to get The Complate Monty Python from Howard. It has been out for about 2 months now, I have my copy right here. It's $1.65 postpaid." --Bill-Dale)

Another ad...

FOR OFFICIAL NEWS AND T-SHIRT INFORMATION FROM MONTY PYTHON SEND A STAMPED, SELF-ADDRESSED ENVELOPE TO: Box 1063, Radio City Station, New York, NY 10019

("Again, everyone send a S.A.S.E. to the people above. I spoke to one Nancy Lewis on the phone, and their organization is the best thing next to IT'S for news of MP goings-on."
--Bill-Dale)

DARK SHADOWS:
AN INTRODUCTION

When this gothic soap opera debuted on ABC-TV in June, 1966, it was only slightly out of the ordinary. Following the plot of a typical gothic novel, the heroine, virginal Victoria Winters (played by Alexandra Moltke) found mystery at the great house at Collinwood, perched high on the storm-swept cliffs of Maine. Alas, the viewers found boredom. Then producer Dan Curtis took a hesitant step into the supernatural with a ghost... then a mysterious lady who controlled fire... but with the introduction of vampire Barnabas Collins (played by Jonathan Frid) the series was fully committed to the supernatural. Word of mouth brought in new viewers, then came the newspaper articles, then the magazines. A phenomena was being born. In increasing numbers that didn't peak until about three years later, people made the supernatural serial the most popular show on daytime TV.

As with any other phenomena, DS had its attendant hoopla and merchandizing--people just couldn't get enough. It became a cult show on college campuses; fan clubs proliferated; the media took note.

The two peak years were from late 1967 to late 1969, encompassing as they did the two most fully realized flashbacks or period stories; those taking place in the years 1795 and 1897. It is generally agreed the period pieces on DS were the finest episodes ever produced, allowing, as they did, the writers more freedom with the characters--Joan Bennett might have a five year contract with the show, but that didn't mean they couldn't kill her character of Naomi in 1795 when it became dramatically advisable to do so. Costumes and period furniture added much more to the unique flavor of the show.

The 1795 flashback recounted the story of how the tormented Barnabas Collins had been stricken with the curse of vampirism when he had rejected the love of the beautiful witch, Angelique Bouchard (played by Lara Parker), for that of the gentle lady, Josette DuPres(played by Kathryn Leigh Scott) while the 1897 flashback introduced the complex and very popular character of Quentin Collins (played by David Selby).

Neither straight horror, nor straight soap opera, the curious combination of both was actually DS' greatest strength. Here were the figures who had long populated horror movies-- the vampire, the werewolf, the artificial man-- but with the added dimension of... 'humanity', if you will; their tragedies made more poignant by the viewers being given insights into their former lives, their motives, their hopes. This was particularly true in the case of Barnabas Collins, where we were shown the devastating effects of vampirism upon a basically gentle man.

DARK SHADOWS ran for 5 years. At least two of these can take their place among the classics of horror film. The other three, though flawed-- five days a week, 52 weeks a year eats up a lot of material--are still a cut above the average product--be it horror movie or ordinary soap.

--Kathy Resch

PO Box 2262, Mission Station , Santa Clara, CA 95051

("Kathy also publishes an excellent zine, the WORLD OF DARK SHADOWS, which is recommended. TWODS #16/17 is a double issue, $3.00 #18, $1.50. The second DS convention, ShadowCon II was held over July 1-4, perhaps Kathy will do a con report for us?" --B.D.)

Fawlty Towers

In this 1975 comedy series written by and starring John Cleese and Connie Booth, Cleese plays Basil Fawlty, owner/operator of Fawlty Towers, a hotel he runs with his wife, Sybil, played by Prunella Scales.

As Fawlty, the henpecked, manic, and petty manager, Cleese is perfect. One minute he can be screaming at the top of his lungs and the next minute he can appear very calm and reserved. As is the case with many situation comedies, Cleese has surrounded himself with an assortment of screwball characters. Punella Scales (a veteran of British television) is well-suited for the role of Sybil, the domineering wife, and when she and Cleese are before the camera the dialogue is very fast and very funny as the insults and witticisms fly. Connie Booth, as Polly, one of their employees, is delightful as the sane member of the cast and in later episodes has been given more to do. But the one who all but steals the show is Andrew Sachs, who plays Manuel, their Spanish waiter who English is non-existent. His scenes with Cleese are always one of the highlights of the show as Cleese tries to get Manuel to perform even the simplest of tasks. Rounding out the cast are the Major (Ballard Berkeley) and Miss Tibbs and Miss Gatsby (Gilly Flower and Renee Roberts). All are regulars of the hotel and each one with their own peculiar quirk.

The storylines are fairly simple and at times predictably but Cleese and the rest of his cast manage to pull it off very well. Favorite episodes include "Gourmet Night" where Cleese tries to serve the perfect meal, "Hotel Inspectors" where Cleese tries to pamper a man he thinks is a hotel inspector, and "The Hospital" where Sybil goes to the hospital to have an ingrown toenail removed. In the latter, Cleese demonstrates his true comic ability as the manic Basil (who has just suffered a mild concussion) waits on a table of Germans and can't help referring to the war.

As with British television, the show is video-taped, but it doesn't look too bad until the cast moves for the outdoor shots and then the series starts to look like a homemade movie.

FAWLTY TOWERS is being shown on various PBS stations at various times so it may be difficult to track down. But the show is a must, particularly for anyone who is tired of conventional American "comedies." The only real complaint I have with the show is that they only made six episodes.

--Tom Mason

705 Draper Road., Blacksburg, VA 24060

RECOMMENDED RADIO---

For you New York and Metrop Area people, a few high points in comedy radio--

Tuesday, 9:30pm, WNYC-fm (93.9) I'M SORRY I'LL READ THAT AGAIN, with Bill Oddie, John "Otto" Cleese, among others, this fine British comedy show is rerun weekly.

Thursday, 10:30pm, WNYC-fm (93.9), THE GOON SHOW, with Peter Sellers, Spike Milligan, the grandaddy of the current crop of British humorists broadcast in the 50's, rebroadcast weekly. If you want to join the Goon Show Preservation Society, write to Brenda Mings, 47 Elizabeth Street, Wharton, NJ 07885 for info.

Snavely

America borrowed Till Death Do Us Part and turned it into All in the Family, they borrowed Steptoe and Son and it became Sanford and Son. We have been taking from the Britons as they took from us back in the 1700's (I'm sorry, I'm still sore--I know how to hold a grudge) in the form of tv comedy adaptations. The prime "borrower" has been Norman Lear's camp. And on Sat., June 24, 1978, ABC ran the unsold pilot of a show called SNAVELY, which was adapted by producers Dean Hargrove and Ronald Kibble from a certain series of British origin known as Fawlty Towers. Yes, Fawlty Towers has been Americanized. Harvey Korman has the John Cleese role, playing the manager of Snavely Manor, flanked by Betty White. Korman plays the Cleese character as loud and gregarious as opposed to manic (which was the key word with Cleese), but all in all, the transition was smooth (it is a shame after looking at the rest of the shows for the fall that this wasn't picked up) and the show was quite good. They lifted the "Hotel Inspector" episode almost completely, including a segment from "The Hospital" -- the fire drill and burglar alarm scene. Betty White has got a boyfriend, Roger, at a competing hotel, but other than that and the names, the show is completely intact. The comedy is slower, and the direction (by Hal Cooper, an All in the Family alumnus) is turgid, but what do you want for American tv. Korman and White work exceptionally well together, and would make an interesting pair. But for me, I'd just rather wait until the new Fawlty Towers shows are shown on PBS.

--Bill-Dale Marcinko

SOME RECOMMENDATIONS--

Second City TV, independent markets, usually at 11:00 or 11:30 p.m. E.S.T. Second City is a comedy school/improv group that graduated a number of the Saturday Night people. It is a dilute Saturday Night show, broadcasting the programming of channel 109 WCTV, a ficticious tv station; commercials, movie parodies, tv parodies, and some of thei own more or less original programs, the AM News, Johnny LaRue show. Some of the material just falls flat, but the show is worth watching, because sometimes it is funny.

Soap, now being rerun in the late-night (11:30 E.S.T.) slot on ABC, this show, which is probably the best offering of last season, bears a second viewing. It is a hard show to get into, since the pacing and appeal of the show is a little ambiguous, but there are some moments of high-quality farce (the trial) and believe it or not, sensitive, wry humor (most all the scenes with Billy Crystal (Jodie, the homosexual), which really improved once they stopped this transvestite bit and got him into the hospital playing opposite Harold Gould.

TELEVISION RATINGS

In the June 24 and July 1 issues of TV GUIDE, were two articles which analyzed the inadequacy of the tv ratings, or"Nielsen's". The 6/24 article described the process by which the Nielsen's are measured, by placing hardware in a secret sample of 1170 TV homes, supposedly representative of the American viewing public. Ratings are life or death to a series, plain and simple, and recently, a system was created that would allow overnight ratings-- so we see otherwise good shows disappear after one or two episodes (before really catching on and allowing an audience to build, or perhaps not doing well, just by the bad luck of being scheduled up against a blockbuster like ROOTS or the Super Bowl. The 6/24 article reported that only 993 actually report, and that with these 993 watching, a sampling error of 1.3 points is used, giving what statisticians call a confidence level of 68%. That means the ratings are only true 68% of the time. One out of every 3 reports is wrong. Using that system, look yourself at the list of final ratings (to April 23) of the shows and movies which had been on, at one time or another, since September. Add or subtract 1.3 from the percentage points (the rating of 30.7 or 19.4 describes the percentage of homes watching that show, out of all the homes watching TV at that time) and follow that difference in both directions. A show like LOGAN's RUN (which was cancelled), could easily have scored as well as CLASS OF '65 (which at the moment is still around) and ran longer than it did. Also, the type of person that installs a black box in their homes, or one of the other 2200 (who keep diaries from which statistics like "what is the #1 show for the 18-35 set? The 65 and over set?" are compiled) diary families does not at all represent the population. The article also shows that more than10 million sets go uncounted. Blacks, Hispanics, old people, people living alone, soldiers, and college students (there are no No Nielsen boxes installed at all in college dormitories) are not represented well at all. But yet the ratings are still taken as the word of God.

1977-78 Regular Series Ratings

(Premiere To April 23 - Nielsen SIAs)

The following averages are based on each series' episodes of regular length. There were certain exceptions. On movie series, films billed as specials were not included but films pegged as regular fare which happened to spillover beyond the normal two-hour running time were factored as regular episodes. Further exception had to made for the umbrella series "ABC Special Monday," NBC's Sunday and Tuesday "Big Event" skein and its Wednesday "Movie & Specials" blanket designation). All programs in the umbrella series were factored in, regardless of length. The final exception was NBC's "World Of Disney," which aired in both two-hour and hourlong episodes during the season; all episodes were factored into the average.

Rank	Series	Web	Rtg.
1.	Laverne & Shirley	ABC	32.0
2.	Happy Days	ABC	30.7
3.	Three's Company	ABC	28.2
4.	All In The Family	CBS	24.3
	Charlie's Angels	ABC	24.3
6.	60 Minutes	CBS	24.0
7.	Little House On The Prairie	NBC	23.9
8.	Alice	CBS	23.2
	Mash	CBS	23.2
0.	One Day At A Time	CBS	23.0
1.	ABC Special Monday	ABC	22.6
2.	Soap	ABC	22.0
3.	Love Boat	ABC	21.8
4.	Eight Is Enough	ABC	21.6
5.	Barney Miller	ABC	21.5
	NFL Monday Night Football	ABC	21.5
7.	How The West Was Won	ABC	21.4
	Fantasy Island	ABC	21.4
9.	Amazing Spider-Man	CBS	21.3
0.	Harvey Korman	ABC	21.2
1.	ABC Sunday Movie	ABC	21.1
	Project UFO	NBC	21.1
3.	NBC Monday Movie	NBC	20.7
4.	Hawaii Five-O	CBS	20.4
	Incredible Hulk	CBS	20.4
6.	Barnaby Jones	CBS	20.2
7	Rhoda	CBS	20.1
8	Welcome Back, Kotter	ABC	20.0
9	On Our Own*	CBS	19.6
	Family	ABC	19.6
	Carter Country	ABC	19.6
2	Sunday Big Event	NBC	19.4
3	The Waltons	CBS	19.2
	Starsky & Hutch	ABC	19.1
	Quincy, M.E.	NBC	19.1
	Donny & Marie	ABC	19.0
	$6 Million Man*	ABC	19.0
	Lucan	ABC	18.8
	ABC Friday Movie	ABC	18.7
	Lou Grant	CBS	18.7
	Baby, I'm Back*	CBS	18.7
	Tuesday Big Event	NBC	18.6
	Fish*	ABC	18.5
44.	Dallas	CBS	18.4
	What's Happening	ABC	18.4
46.	Rockford Files	NBC	18.3
47.	Grizzly Adams	NBC	18.0
48.	Betty White*	CBS	17.9
49.	CBS Tuesday Movie	CBS	17.7
50.	CBS Wednesday Movie	CBS	17.6
	Class Of '65	NBC	17.6
52.	Julie Farr, M.D.	ABC	17.5
53.	Good Times	CBS	17.4
54.	Black Sheep Squadron	NBC	17.3
55.	AES Hudson Street	ABC	17.2
56.	The Jeffersons	CBS	17.1
57.	Richie Brockelman, Private Eye	NBC	16.9
	Bionic Woman	NBC	16.9
59.	World Of Disney	NBC	16.8
60.	CBS Friday Movie*	CBS	16.7
	Wednesday Movies & Specials	NBC	16.7
62.	Baretta*	ABC	16.6
	Chips	NBC	16.6
64.	Carol Burnett*	CBS	16.4
65.	Bob Newhart*	CBS	16.3
66.	Operation Petticoat	ABC	16.1
67.	NBC Saturday Movie	NBC	16.0
68.	Wonder Woman	CBS	15.9
69.	Sam*	CBS	15.8
70.	Hardy Boys/Nancy Drew	ABC	15.5
71.	Tony Randall*	CBS	15.4
72.	Police Woman	NBC	15.2
73.	CPO Sharkey	NBC	15.1
	Redd Foxx*	ABC	15.1
	Rafferty*	CBS	15.1
76.	Tabitha*	ABC	14.9
	Return Of Captain Nemo*	CBS	14.9
78.	Maude*	CBS	14.7
79.	Busting Loose*	CBS	14.6
80.	Mel & Susan Together	ABC	14.5
81.	Logan's Run*	CBS	14.4
82.	Husbands, Wives & Lovers*	CBS	14.3
	Oregon Trail*	NBC	14.3
84.	Switch*	CBS	14.1
85.	Kojak*	CBS	14.0
	San Pedro Beach Bums*	ABC	14.0
87.	Quark	NBC	13.8
	Man From Atlantis	NBC	13.8
	We've Got Each Other*	CBS	13.8
	Young Dan'l Boone*	CBS	13.8
	James At 16	NBC	13.8
92.	Sugar Time	ABC	13.6
93.	Young Pioneers	ABC	13.5
	Hanna-Barbera Happy Hour	NBC	13.5
95.	Richard Pryor*	NBC	13.4
	Chico & The Man	NBC	13.4
	Ted Knight*	CBS	13.4
98.	Rosetti & Ryan*	NBC	13.2
99.	Szysznyk*	CBS	13.1
100.	Sanford Arms*	NBC	13.0
101.	ABC Monday Night Baseball	ABC	12.5
102	Big Hawaii*	NBC	12.2
103.	Chuck Barris Rah Rah Show	NBC	11.8
	Shields & Yarnell*	CBS	11.8
105.	The Fitzpatricks*	CBS	11.7
106.	Celebrity Challenge Of The Sexes*	CBS	11.6
107.	Another Day*	CBS	11.5
108.	Comedy Time	NBC	11.4
109.	Mulligan's Stew*	NBC	10.5

*Cancelled

CIPHERS

a column by mike france

In fandom, there are many little sub-groups-- like those into Batman, Ub Iwerks, Carl Barks, or S & M funnies. One of these little sub groups is spy fandom. Our ideas of classics are MAN FROM UNCLE, THE AVENGERS, and James Bond films, when they made them right.

I'm one of those people...so when Bill (or Dale--whichever one of them is into necrophilia, I'll be damned if I can remember) approached me to do a column on spy films (right now, I publish a Bond zine called LICENSE TO KILL, or in its last incarnation, MR. KISS KISS BANG BANG), I decided to accept. Obviously; why would I write a clumsy intro to my column if it didn't exist? Well, enough of that.

There are any number of spy projects lying around, waiting to be picked up. MGM is still holding onto Sam Rolfe's MAN FROM U.N.C.L.E. revival script, hesitant to do anything. A return of GET SMART was announced, but nothing happened. THE NEW AVENGERS is a revival of the fine old show with Patrick MacNee, but unless you live in the British Isles or Canada, you might as well forget it. BIG SECRET is a spy series with Bill Cosby, produced by Sheldon Leonard (both of I SPY), but nothing has happened yet. The success of THE SPY WHO LOVED ME might spur them on, but everyone is jumping on the SF bandwagon right now.

Enigma: A REVIEW

Ever heard of it? If you missed it, you're not likely to see it again. It was aired last year as a pilot for a new spy series. It ranked in the lower sixties in the Neilsens, and while it wasn't the best, it hardly deserved it.

It dealt with Andrew Icarus, an agent for Triangle (an acronym?), headed by Maurice Mockcastle (Guy Doleman) and a second-banana agent, Mei San Gow (Soon Teck Oh, who played a strikingly similar role in MAN WITH THE GOLDEN GUN). The Triangle headquarters is underground, and flashy (unecessarily so, almost like a shopping mall). Sounds like MAN FROM UNCLE? Sam Rolfe did the script, and he had a hand in UNCLE's creation.

The pilot had the basic plot of an underground army, financed by looted diamonds. When an old diamond cutter id abducted, Icarus contacts the cutter's step-daughter (Melinda Dillon, of CLOSE ENCOUNTERS). The intrigue in this isn't particularly intriguin, and this can be attributed to the anti-violence BS. To a point, fine, but the anti-violence business is taken as, "Kill all excitement," and as a result the action sequences are turgid. The pacifist era of spy shows is obvious: Icarus' gun only puts people to sleep, for one thing.

Finally, Icarus tracks down the kidnappers, and the climax in which Icarus is being pursued by a tank is the highlight of the show. When the smoke has cleared and everyone involved has been apprehended, we find that Triangle has a way of staying a secret organization: the stonecutter's daughter has her memory erased of the events.

It's too bad, really. If this were aired six months later (original air date May 22, 1977) it would have the support of films like STAR WARS & THE SPY WHO LOVED ME, and with pseudo-spy crap like WONDER WOMAN and CAPT. NEMO on the air, ENIGMA would be a welcome relief from today's TV. As Icarus would say: Pity.

--Mike France

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PROJECT U.F.O.

The television series PROJECT U.F.O. has to stand as one of the greatest gambles ever made in programming. First, a controversial subject was picked-- UFOs. Interesting, but highly controversial. Then a theme was picked-- Project Blue Book-- which itself has already received massive publicity, and supposedly had already dealt the the "UFO problem." Finally, a factual basis was used, shying away from sensationalism, even using Jack Webb himself as a narrator.

It was a risk, but the risk seems to have paid off. The programs are of top-notch quality. The special effects are usually best when using colored lights, but the saucers depicted are imaginative and usually realistic.

(An aside. One argument against the reality of UFOs is this-- if UFOs are real, why are there so many different designs. Every week on PROJECT U.F.O. you see at least two new styles-- and these are, remember, based on actual reports.

Consider this-- if airplanes are real, why are there so many different designs? Yep, airplanes. If one single planet can produce thousands of different airplanes, all operating on the same planet under largely the same circumstances, why should anything less be expected of builders of UFOs, who obviously have to take many different planetary enviroments into account when designing their ships?)

Best of all, the program has established the two investigators as "real" people. They have their own faults, their own interests, and maintain as much of a sense of objectivity as could be expected from two humans in their position. The cases picked, including the hoaxes, are interesting, and informative. The viewer can pick up quite a bit of information about UFOs, how they operate, where they might be found, etc.

I have studied UFOs myself for nearly a decade, and have had one sighting of a UFO pursued by Air Force jets. I was even fortunate enough to get a copy of the original (one of the original) BLUE BOOK reports, and so far I do not see anyplace where PROJECT U.F.O. violates what has happened in reality.

There is, though, one minor problem with some of the episodes, and this is the tendency to leave some "revelation" until the very end, after the investigators have left. For example, one man was supposedly kidnapped by a UFO. The investigators found him later after he sought sanctuary in a church. After they left, the man pulled his hand from his pocket, showing it had been marked by the UFO people.

Since the show is based on fact, we are left to wonder whether this is actually part of the case itself and, if so, how did the investigators know this after they had already left? One time or two is all right, but this problem has asserted itself a little too often for comfort.

Still, quite obviously, no show is perfect, and PROJECT U.F.O. has shown it has the guts to go where few shows have gone before.

-- Jim Crawford

4688 Marburg #3, Cincinnati, OH 45209

FROM WHICH COMES PLEASANT TREASURES
Brought to you by National Raisin Miners

PROJECT BUFFOON

When Jim Crawford said PROJECT UFO is not perfect, he had grasped a small kernal of the truth.

The show is ludicrous.

Yes, the special effects are adequate, the reports themselves deviate only slightly from Project Blue Book, and occasionally some factual information is disseminated.

But the show is marred in the area of characterization, in the specific person of our two main investigators.

Perhaps their personalities are indicative of real employees of the Air Force, but how Jim can say the "two investigators are 'real' people" is beyond me.

If clumsiness, buffoonery, and banality are common traits, yes.

I don't know which lead is worse:

The down-home Southerner with stupid jokes, uninteresting commentary, and a general conceptualization approaching only Jerry Hubbard of AMERICA 2-NIGHT in his total asininity.

Or the other officer, a young Jack Webb, no doubt, "Just the facts, m'am, just give me the facts," whose only strong point is that the writers of this bombshell didn't try to give him the same interesting qualities as Mr. Kentucky Fried above.

They bound into the scene, ask a few sporatic questions, bop out, quipping unfunny witticisms on their way out.

And so it goes.

I have investigated UFO's, and this show is about as damaging and inaccurate in the process and style of investigations as I can imagine.

As to it being controversial, and the decision to do the show a gutsy and dynamic one, think again. Some enterprising NBC exec took a look at CLOSE ENCOUNTERS, STAR WARS, and the box office receipts and threw the show together-- getting Mr. Dead On Camera No Emotion Jack Webb to produce it in record time.

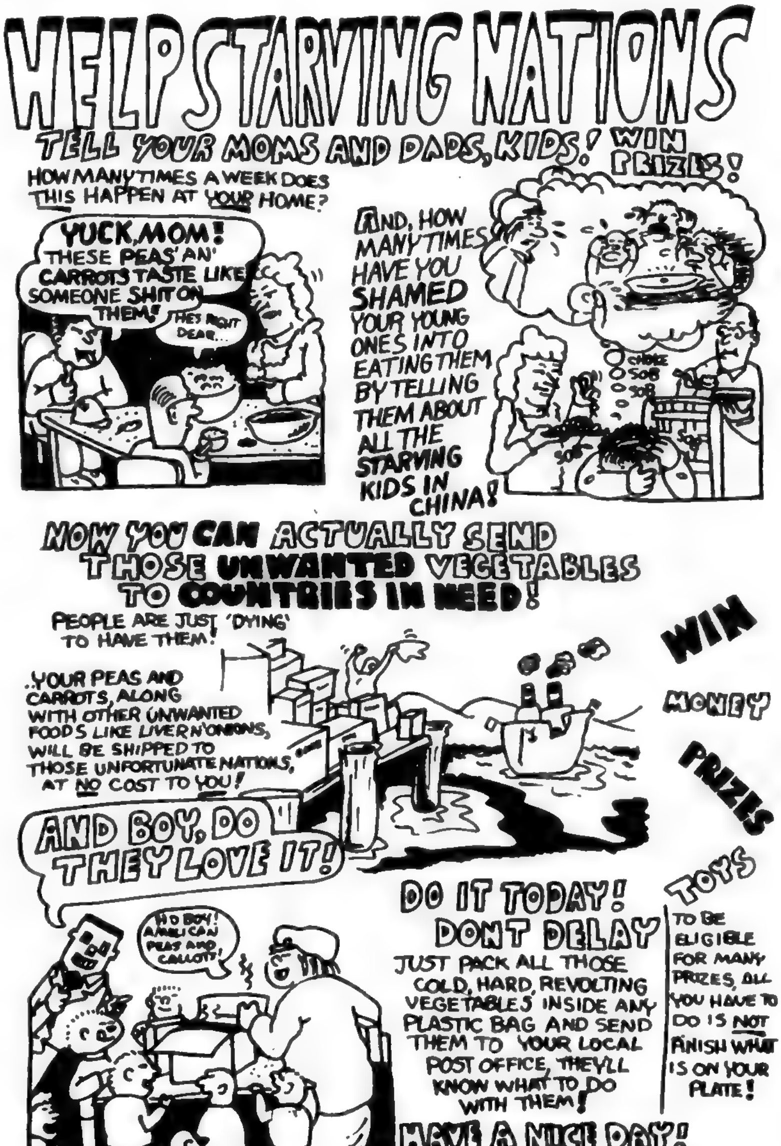
Project Blue Book is not "controversial" in my book. In fact, at this point in time, most people in the military will affirm the existence of UFOs. Even Jimmy Carter has told us about his sighting, as millions of readers of the NATIONAL STAR and MIDNIGHT probably know by now.

All we are waiting for now is actual visitation. And when the aliens do appear, I certainly hope they are packing death rays and point them in the general direction of this show. --B.D.M.

DEAR EVERYONE LIVING,

Guess what? I found a new cause. I'm not too much into whales, and ever since the 60's I wanted something to protest ~~cause I'm too stupid and lazy to get a job likeeveryone else~~ because I want to help my fellow human beings. I was heading up the Death Lib Coalition as you know, but then that creep Bill has to come back to life, as a clone, too!! Ge-jus! But now, with this wonderful Mr. Spim, I'm now carrying on for the Save The Raisin Foundation, dedicated, in part to stopping those poor migrant farm workers from going down into the raisin mines, and get instead some lazy business executives who make over $100,000 Down There INSTEAD of these poor, underpayed laborers.

--Emma Counterculture
Hate-Ashbury


HELP STARVING NATIONS
TELL YOUR MOMS AND DADS, KIDS! WIN PRIZES!
HOW MANY TIMES A WEEK DOES THIS HAPPEN AT YOUR HOME?
YUCK, MOM! THESE PEAS AN' CARROTS TASTE LIKE SOMEONE SHIT ON THEM!
HE'S RIGHT DEAR...
AND, HOW MANY TIMES HAVE YOU SHAMED YOUR YOUNG ONES INTO EATING THEM BY TELLING THEM ABOUT ALL THE STARVING KIDS IN CHINA!
CHOKE
SOB
SOB
SOB
NOW YOU CAN ACTUALLY SEND THOSE UNWANTED VEGETABLES TO COUNTRIES IN NEED!
PEOPLE ARE JUST 'DYING' TO HAVE THEM!
..YOUR PEAS AND CARROTS, ALONG WITH OTHER UNWANTED FOODS LIKE LIVER N'ONIONS, WILL BE SHIPPED TO THOSE UNFORTUNATE NATIONS, AT NO COST TO YOU!
AND BOY, DO THEY LOVE IT!
HO BOY! AMELICAN PEAS AND CALLOTS!
WIN
MONEY
PRIZES
TOYS
DO IT TODAY! DONT DELAY
JUST PACK ALL THOSE COLD, HARD, REVOLTING VEGETABLES INSIDE ANY PLASTIC BAG AND SEND THEM TO YOUR LOCAL POST OFFICE, THEY'LL KNOW WHAT TO DO WITH THEM!
TO BE ELIGIBLE FOR MANY PRIZES, ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS NOT FINISH WHAT IS ON YOUR PLATE!
HAVE A NICE DAY!

by douglas bryson

by tom mason

special
humorizing
process by
bill-dale marci·

TOM MASON'S INUNDATION CENTER

Welcome to the first installment of INUNDATION CENTER. This column is designed to answer any questions you might have concerning film or television shows and will be appearing in each issue of AFTA.

The answers, indexes, and questions in this first installment come from my own personal collection. ("With a little help from your ed" --B.D.)

There are no spastic fubars to report on at the beginning, because this is the first installment of INUNDATION CENTER. Hey, folks, we're batting 1.000, let's keep it that way... BEEEWWAAARRRRRE the spastic fubar!

Well, since I don't have a funny first name that I can make jokes about, and I have to fill up this space, since nobody is sending me questions. I know, this is AFTA, not TBG or RBCC, but c'mon guys. Well, just for that, I'll have to write out all the verses of the LUMBERJACK SONG instead,

"Oh, I'm a lumberjack and I'm ok,
I work all night and I sleep all day!"

Is that right? Oh my god! I didn't know it was so hard being cute!

Well, let's get onto the questions.

As always, I appreciate your help with the questions (if you feel expert in a certain area, let me know), and that every one who sends in questions include a few stamps for me to write to those other peopl who are supposed to write to me telling me they know so much already. Of course, the best thing to do is make up the questions and the answers, like I ("We") did this ish, that way I don't have to go through the trouble answering or writing any letters. In fact, why bother even sending them to me?

Now to the indexes. They are incomplet at best. I have about two dozen or so book at my disposal (plus my personal viewing), but even then I can't possibly find all the films for a given person. Reader contributi are greatly encourage and will be duly noted in future columns.

Address all mail to TOM MASON
705 Draper Road
Blacksburg, VA 2406

HOW MANY FILMS HAS DAVID (DARTH VADER) PROWSE BEEN IN?

You'd be surprised:
CASINO ROYALE (1967), HAMMERHEAD (68), THE HORROR OF FRANKENSTEIN (70), VAMPIRE CIRCUS (71), A CLOCKWORK ORANGE (71), FRANKENSTEIN AND THE MONSTER FROM HELL (72), CARRY ON HENRY VIII (72), STAR WARS (77), JABBERWOCKY (77).

I RECENTLY SAW THE LONG GOODBYE ON TV. WHY IS SPECIAL MENTION GIVEN TO DAN BLOCKER? HE WASN'T EVEN IN THE FILM.

Continuing Robert Altman's practice of offbeat casting, Dan Blocker was originally scheduled to star in the film as Philip Marlowe. But the ol' Hoss dropped dead and the role was filled by Elliot Gould.

HOW MANY THIN MAN PICTURES WERE MADE?

Several thousand. One on each frame.
THE THIN MAN (1933) Director: W.S. Van Dyk
AFTER THE THIN MAN (1936) Dir: Van Dyke.
ANOTHER THIN MAN (1939) Dir: Van DYke.
SHADOW OF THE THIN MAN (1941) Dir: Van Dyke
THIN MAN GOES HOME (1944) Dir: Richard Thor
SONG OF THE THIN MAN (1947) Dir: Ed Buzzell

All six starred William Powell and Myrna Lo and the first three are classics! Look

Tom Mason's INUNDATION CENTER
(continued)

for Shemp Howard (of the 3 Stooges) in an unbilled role in ANOTHER THIN MAN.

IS IDA LUPINO DEAD YET?

Probably.

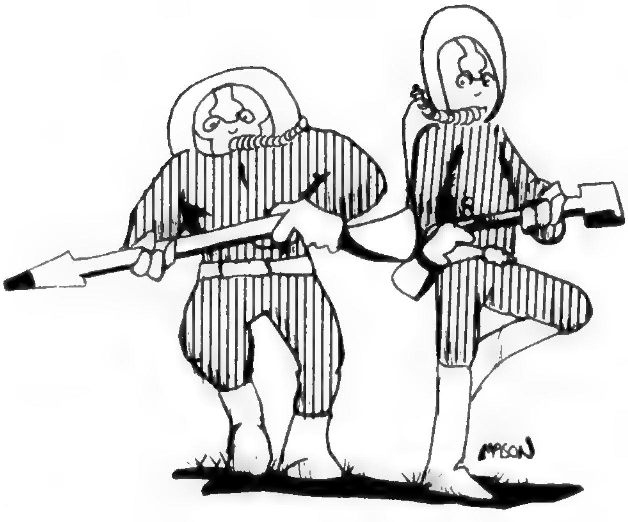
WHAT ARE ALL OF THE PEOPLE WHO DID 'GILLIGAN'S ISLAND' UP TO THESE DAYS?

Alan Hale runs a seafood restaurant and recently appeared in an episode of THE LOVE BOAT. Russell Johnson is doing bit parts in movies and television (he had a small part in the film McARTHUR). Jim Backus is doing films and tv (his last film was PETE'S DRAGON) and he still does the voice for Mr. Magoo. I don't know what Natalie Schaefer is up to. Tina Louise is doing made-for-tv movies and is currently a deoderant spokesperson ("safe for the ozone"). Dawn Wells makes movies with Charles B. Pierce productions. Her last one was THE TOWN THAT DREADED SUNDOWN. And Bob Denver had a couple of syndicated shows (Dusty's Trail among them) that failed. He recently did the "Dobie Gillis" reunion show. His hair is now white as snow.

COULD YOU TELL ME THE TV SERIES IN WHICH ROY THINNES PLAYED A LARGE RAISIN FROM THE PLANET MERCURY WHO CAME TO EARTH TO SPREAD MIRTH AND LAUGHTER?

("Excuse me, Tom, but I know what's going on! I know it's you, SPIM! Sneaking in that question in this column when I'm not watching. A poor excuse for spreading what is clearly raisin propoganda, once again! I can see through it. Raisins are not even grown and mined on Mercury, much less a raisin the size of Roy Thinnes!! So cut it out, you are no longer co-editor, I am suspending you as of this page!"
--Bill-Dale)

I'M NOT LEAVING, NOT UNTIL I SPREAD THE WORD OF THE RAISIN TO ALL MANKIND, JUST TRY AND STOP ME, FOUR EYES!!



Are you talking to me?

("I don't know who he's talking to. We both have glasses, Tom." --Bill-Dale)

Should I go on?

("Yes, I'm sorry. Just ignore him, and he'll go away." --Bill-Dale)

Okay...

WHO DOES THE MUSIC FOR ALL OF THE JAMES BOND FILMS?

Monty Norman wrote the Bond theme that is used in all of the films. Monty Norman did the music for DR. NO. George Martin did LIVE AND LET DIE. Marvin Hamlisch did THE SPY WHO LOVED ME. John Barry did all the rest.

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO GEORGE LAZENBY?

Who? Oh, you mean that other Bond. He's still around. Check him out in ON HER MAJESTY'S SECRET SERVICE (69), THE DRAGON FLIES (MAN FROM HONG KONG) (75), STONER (76), COVER GIRLS (77-TV). He also had a cameo role in KENTUCKY FRIED MOVIE (77).

WHAT HAS PAMELA SUE MARTIN DONE BESIDES "NANCY DREW"

TO FIND A MAN (SEX AND THE TEENAGER) (72), THE POSEIDON ADVENTURE (72), OUR TIME (DEATH OF HER INNOCENCE) (74), BUSTER AND BILLIE (74). She is currently appearing in an RC Cola commercial.

WHAT BECAME OF RAY WALSTON, "MY FAVORITE MARTIAN?"

He recently played a thug (along with Richard Kiel) in 1976's THE SILVER STREAK.

IS IT TRUE THAT BARBARA BILLINGSLEY ("MOM" ON LEAVE IT TO BEAVER) WAS RECENTLY DISEMBOWELED AT A LOCAL P.T.A. "TRICKY TRAY" IN HER OWN TACOMA, WASHINGTON?

Yes, with a "Magic Fingers" Vege-Slicer.

Tom Mason's INUNDATION CENTER
(continued)

FOR THE LAST TIME, WHO PLAYED LURCH IN "THE ADDAMS FAMILY?"

For the last time, Ted Cassidy. Cassidy also had a regular role in the syndicated series "The Adventures of Huck Finn." And he can be seen in: BUTCH CASSIDY AND THE SUNDANCE KID (69), McKENNA'S GOLD (69), THE LIMIT (72), THE SLAMS (73), GENESIS II (73-TV), PLANET EARTH (74-TV), BENNY AND BARNEY: LAS VEGAS UNDERCOVER (77-TV), HALLOWEEN WITH THE ADDAMS FAMILY (77-TV) More? POOR PRETTY EDDIE (75) HARRY AND WALTER GO TO N.Y. (76). Richard Kiel (who is often confused with Cassidy) has been in the following: THE MAGIC SWORD (62), HOUSE OF THE DAMNED (63), THE HUMAN DUPLICATORS (65), A MAN CALLED DAGGER (67), THE LONGEST YARD (74), BARBARY COAST (75-TV), SILVER STREAK (76), FLESH AND FIRECAT (77), SPY WHO LOVED ME (77). HE also had a regular role as the bouncer in the short-lived series "Barbary Coast."

I AM A BIG FAN OF SHAUN CASSIDY'S. WHAT DO YOU SUGGEST?

Professional help.

HOW ABOUT A CAROLINE MUNRO INDEX?

Hubba Hubba. DRACULA A.D. 1972 (72), GOLDEN VOYAGE OF SINBAD (74), CAPTAIN KRONOS, VAMPIRE HUNTER (74), AT THE EARTH'S CORE (76), THE DEVIL WITHIN HER (76), THE SPY WHO LOVED ME (77). Additions? She is also the star of the new Schick shaving cream commercials ("Let Schick CReam Ya") and is set for a major role in STARCRASH.

WHAT FILMS HAS RICHARD PRYOR BEEN IN?

THE BUSY BODY (67), WILD IN THE STREETS (68), THE GREEN BERETS (68), YOU'VE GOT TO WALK IT LIKE YOU TALK IT OR YOU'LL LOSE THAT BEAT (70), THE PHYNX (70), ADIOS AMIGOS (?), DYNAMITE CHICKEN (72), LADY SINGS THE BLUES (72), THE MACK (73), WATTSTAX (73), HIT (73), SOME CALL IT LOVING (73), BLAZING SADDLES (73-writer), UPTOWN SATURDAY NIGHT (74), BINGO LONG (76), CAR WASH (76), SILVER STREAK (76), GREASED LIGHTNING (77), WHICH WAY IS UP? (77). Pryor also had his own five-week tv series on NBC in 1977 and he currently has five films in various stages of development at three studios.

("You forgot Paul Scraeder's BLUE COLLAR!")

WHAT ABOUT ARNOLD STANG?

ARnold Stang? Are you out of your mind?

and so it ends, on that happy note. Next issue Bill will run the John Carradine index he didn't run this issue, unless you give him a good reason not to. Suggestions for indices in film and tv?

Bye. --Tom Mason

705 Draper Road, Blacksburg, VA 24060

A REVIEW BY TOM MASON

THE STRANGE CASE OF THE END OF CIVILIZATION AS WE KNOW IT

What better person to play Sherlock Holmes than Pythonite John Cleese? Cleese and co-writers Jack Hobbs and Joe McGrath have tak the Holmes legend and set it in modern England with Cleese and Arthur Lowe as the grandsons of the famous sleuth and his bumbling companion.

The story begins when Dr. Gropinger (Ron Moody in a Kissinger mask) loses his travel diary thus causing him to forget whic country he is in. He greets a welcoming committee of Arabs with "Shalom!" and is sho on sight. New Scotland Yard (with the aid o a smart-alec computer) deduces that this is the work of Professor Moriarty, the (you guessed it) grandson of Holmes' perennial nemesis, and a call is sent to the current Sherlock Holmes.

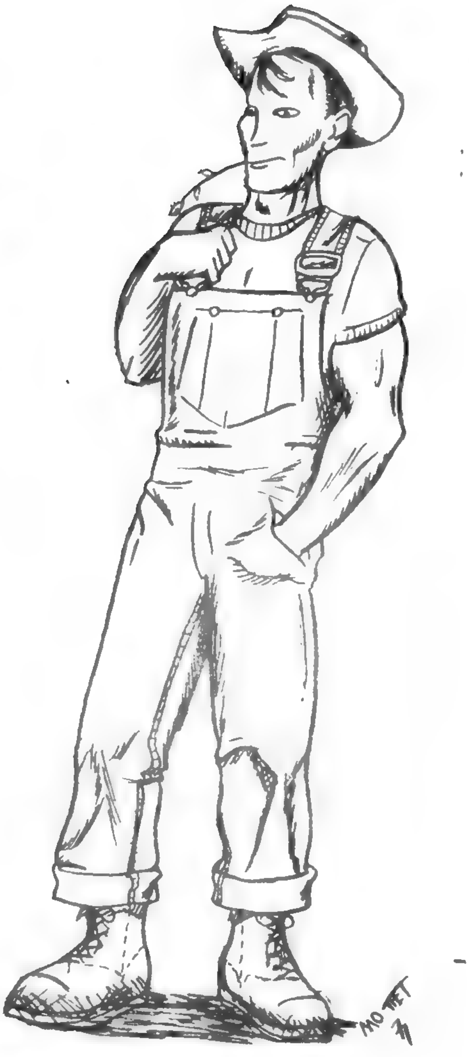
Holmes (who uses marijuana now instead o cocaine) and Watson (who has acquired a bion nose) formulate a plan to flush out Moriarit by bringing together all of the world's greatest detectives under one rook knowing that he won't be able to resist the temptati of trying to kill them all. The plan works and there is a hilarious scene in which Hol and Watson work a crossword puzzle ("Two dow 'Conservative pays ex-wife maintenance.' Sev and four! "Alimony Tory, my dear Watson.") the guests are disposed of by Moriarity.

Most of the jokes work, although some fl by so fast you have to listen very closely. Arthur Lowe's Dr. Watson is priceless ("He' been stabbed, Watson." "Good lord! How do you know that, Holmes?" "Well he's got a knife sticking out of his back hasn't he?" "Amazing. Your powers of deduction never c to astound me.") Connie Booth (Cleese's rea life wife) is fine as Mrs. Hudson and the r of the cast is well above average. PINK PANTHER fans should look for Burt Kwouk (Ca in a small role as a Chinese delegate.

The only flaw with the program is that i is videotaped (as most English television i Video tape tends to have a very poor sound quality and gives the production a cheap app ance. If you can stand the low quality of t tape, then THE STRANGE CASE is a must for al fans of Cleese, Monty Python, and Sherlock H

AFTA

THE MAGAZINE OF STEREOTYPES



No. 7 -
"The Farmer"

In Kurt Vonnegut's latest novel, SLAPSTICK, he says something in the prologue that I would like to repeat for you, for a reason somewhere between thinking it may be meaningful to you and/or something to fill up the space at the bottom of this page. I quote,

> I have called it "Slapstick" because it is grotesque, situational poetry--like the slapstick film comedies, especially those of Laurel and Hardy, of long ago.
>
> It is about what life feels like to me.
>
> There are all these tests of my limited agility and intelligence. They go on and on.
>
> The fundamental joke with Laurel and Hardy it seems to me, was that they did their best with every test.
>
> There was very little love in their films. There was often the situational poetry of marriage, which was something else again. It was yet another test--with comical possibilities, provided that everybody submitted to it in good faith.
>
> Love was never an issue. And, perhaps because I was so perpetually intoxicated and instructed by Laurel and Hardy during my childhood in the Great Depression, I find it natural to discuss life without ever mentioning love.
>
> It does not seem important to me.
>
> What does seem important? Bargaining in good faith with destiny.
>
> I have had some experiences with love, or think I have, anyway, although the ones I have liked best could easily be described as "common decency." I treated somebody well for a little while, or maybe even for a tremendously long time, and that person treated me well in turn. Love need not have had anything to do with it.
>
> Also: I cannot distinguish between the love I have for people and the love I have for dogs. When a child, and not watching comedians on film or listening to comedians on the radio, I used to spend a lot of time rolling around on rugs with uncritically affectionate dogs we had. And I still do a lot of that. The dogs become tired and confused and embarrassed long before I do. I could go one forever.
>
> One time, on his 21st birthday, one of my 3 adopted sons, who was about to leave for the Amazon Rain Forest, said to me, "You know--you've never hugged me."
>
> So I hugged him. We hugged each other. It was very nice. It was like rolling around on a rug with a Great Dane we used to have.
>
> Love is where you find it. I think it is foolish to go looking for it, and I think it can often be poisonous.
>
> I wish that people who are conventionally supposed to love each other would say to each other, when they fight, "Please-- a little less love, and a little more common decency."

(c) 1976, Kurt Vonnegut, Jr.

"Think on that." --Bill-Dale

MEDIA MUSINGS

L. Bruce Sapp

Hello and welcome to the first installment of *Media Musings*, a column devoted to rantings and ravings on all forms of public expression and entertainment: television, radio, movies, books, records, magazines, comics, what have you. Hopefully, this col hasn't arrive too late for Bill-Dale to print...if it has, then you aren't reading it and what I say won't matter anyway. If it does see the light of flame (flame before ashes before ascension, I always say), then you probably don't care what is said either, because everyone knows that whatever BDM prints has got to be mediocre (and you can bet your ash on it). Seriously, I can't stand seriousness. I think.

Anywhoos, this first edition of MM is going to discuss violence in popular culture. Why choose such a heavy topic for a fan column? Wel,, I figure that if *AFTA* can get into things like sexism in comics, and if my own column in *The Buyer's Guide* (*FutureView*, as if anyone cares) can cover sexual equality in sf and comics, then why not get into the implication and effects of blood and gore on our everyday lives?

By now, every reader of TBG has probably pegged me as a flaming radical, which is fine with me. I like to consider myself a liberal in thought, word, and deed, and if that bothers you, tough. I'm not out to deliberately antagonize anyone, but if you want to fight, come on. Being a pacifist at heart, I can only resort to verbal invective.

My pacifistic leanings do not rule out the use of cathartic violence in the entertainment media, however. This whole column stems from two movies seen within a few weeks of each other, both powerful anti-war statements. I was not ready for the effects of either film, so I was stunned for the entire period between them. When the effects of the first one had worn off, I saw the next one, not knowing that it was going to be just as depressing.

The first film was excellent, a classic that won the Academy Award when it first came out in the late 30's. The film? *All's Quiet On The Western Front*, starring Lew Ayres. The movie focuses on a class of students in a small German town who are talked into joining the army by their professor, a veteran of past battles himself. The boys join the army, expecting to be glorious warriors fighting for the fatherland, but learning instead the grim realities of war. No organization, scrounging for food, not able to take a bath for weeks at a time, losing buddies right and left, Lew, as the natural leader of the boys, returns home on leave. He looks up his old professor and is asked to tell the new class what it is like to fight for the good of the country. Lew gives it to the boys and the prof practically tosses him out.

Especially powerful in this movie are four scenes--the first time the boys see battle, the first one of them hit goes blind and screams and thrashes on the battlefield while the rest of them watch. The second scene is actually a running subject: one of the boys dies and his brand-new boots are passed all through the troop as different wearers die. The third scene occurs when Lew is trapped in a foxhole with one of the enemy, whom he stabs once and then watches die slowly. The fourth and final scene involves Lew carrying one of the older soldiers back to camp. While Lew is talking and carrying the wounded man, a stray bullet hits his burden. Lew is not aware of his friend's death until they are back at camp and the older man is examined by a medic.

For its time, *All's Quiet On The Western Front* was a powerful statement. America was not at war, but much of Europe was. Considering they sympathetic treatment given the Germans here, and America's strict nationalism during WWII, the film becomes even more important, especially for present-day warmongers.

The second film was *The Boys In Company C* a film currently making the rounds in movie houses. While not as well made and tightly done as *All's Quiet*, *The Boys in Company C* makes an anti-war statement just as strong as the older film. This film centers around a group of individuals who meet in Marine boot camp before being sent to Vietnam. A street-wise black fouls up the platoon's training by watching out for just himself, is dressed up and down by his sergeant, heckled by four new transfers, and finally promises to straighten up if his four former campmates are returned from the brig (how they got there is not important). The black eventually becomes squad leader and molds his squad into a finely tuned fighting machine. This squad learns soccer from a looney general and are promised they won't have to fight if they win over the Viet Cong's team. When the actual game is ready to be played, the squad is told to lose to let the VC save face. The squad goes ahead and wins when the learn the other team is owned by a South Vietnamese officer who trafficks in drugs and other illicit practic The win precipitates a blood bath which ends the movie.

The scenes in *Company C* are more vivid, more gory and gut-wrenching. The fact that *Company C* is a color film (as compared to *All's Quiet* in b&w) doesn't help matters much either. The graphic violence is enough to make anyone swear off swatting flies, while the psychological punch of the first film produces much of the same reaction. So which is better? *All's Quiet* with its "clean" violence (there is blodd, natch, but not as much), or *Company C* with its rivers of scarlet and limbless bodies?

My first experience with graphic violence in science fiction was the stoning of Michael in Heinlein's *Stranger In A Strange Land*. Before that, I had read all the cosmic bang-bang-shoot-em-ups of E.E. "Doc" Smith and Edmond Hamilton, not realizing that there was more to death and dying than pushing a button and obliterating the enemy with a fifty-gigaton plasmatronic proto-nuclear bomb. *Stranger* may have been the book that led me to pacifism as a way of life. Oh, sure, I joke about punching somebody out or getting into S&M, but as Burt Reynolds says in *The End*, "Pain hurts me".

("You mean you weren't *serious* about the bondage weekend we were planning??" -BI

Comic books can sometimes irk me with their callous treatment of death. I was

MEDIA MUSINGS by L. Bruce Sapp
(continued)

especially appalled with the most recent incarnation of DC's Spectre. He went around changing crooks into wax, snipping them in half with giant scissors,melting their flesh, and doing all sorts of nasty things that I was surprised to find the Comics Code of Approval on. I personally believe that violence, when portrayed realistically and not as a force for good, can be a catharsis, thus releasing a person's hostilities vicariously. I worry about people who view a particularly violent movie and then feel the need to go out and kill everybody because people are so horrible. Perhaps if violence is shown as a destructive force instead of a positive one, people like this would see differently.

The whole argument can best be summed in the words of one of my close friends: "I think the most violent part of A CLOCKWORK ORANGE was when they forced Alex to keep his eyes open during the treatment." Food for thought, especially if you've seen the movie. Is violence useful or detrimental? Only when it's not gratuitous or laundered can it be useful. And not until then.

--L. Bruce Sapp,
1546 3rd St. E, Milan, IL 61264

("When I talked to L. Bruce (goddammit what does that 'L.' stand for) on the phone a few weeks back, he hadn't seen COMING HOME, which is my vote for the most effective anti-war movie I've ever seen. It is set here in the U.S., and there is not a single single of battle, either gory or laundered. I think it is so effective because the MENACE (the Vietnam war) is clear, it is real thing which frightens people. In many ways, COMING HOME Is about the aftermath of war on human beings. An anti-war movie is the least effective when it "pretties" up the action, although I don't feel blood and gore is a necessary prerequisite (COMING HOME had no gore), the way KOJAK and STARSKY AND HUTCH and BARETTA and cop shows of that type are mental heroin. Ed Via and I talked on the phone about this-- the danger in violence is not that people will mimic the violent persons, but that violence will become commonplace (resulting in incidents like the Kitty Genovese murder in New York with 30 witnesses watching) and that people will accept it as so much television, or worse yet, ignore that aspect of war and get all muddled up with patriotic, idealistic visions and forget the barbarism of their act. I know people who went to Vietnam and came back different, some as other people, and I can't see how anyone could willingly subject themselves to that kind of situation. The thing with the SPECTRE is probably the same thing, confusing violent acts by making them vague and symbolic (turning people into mannikins and then chopping their heads off), the same way Burgess and Kubrick do (although for decidedly different results)in A CLOCKWORK ORANGE, by utilizing the futuristic, teenage dialect to replace violent words with cute, nonsensical ones. For instance, he says, as fumbling around for his paperback copy of A CLOCKWORK ORANGE with a neat glossary in the back, if I were to tell you, that I took a britva and ripped your brooko/and all your keeshkas dropped out and you creeched gromky, translated from NADSAT, it would mean that I took a razor and ripped your stomach open and all your guts dropped out and you screamed loudly. But where Burgess uses it as a satiric device, someone like Fleisher on the SPECTRE was little more than a sicko. I'm sorry, but I followed that series, too, in fascination of its total lack of any values and absurd violence. But enough, as I said if I write too much on the page, I have to get byline credit, and we don't want that, do we? Not after I had the audacity to put my name on the cover "A Bill-Dale Marcinko production," no less. It is best not to humor me...

And now, without breaking stride, a taste of Wheeler Dixon, whose feature article follows on the next page..." --Bill-Dale)

Wheeler Dixon on

The Big Sleep

It's hard to know where to start in on Michael Winner's 1978 remake of *The Big Sleep*; perhaps by saying that Winner is *not* an untalented director, but he *is* an incredibly lazy one. Winner's personality is legendarily abrasive, everyone who's ever worked with him hates him, he slave drives his crews, and makes movies faster than anyone short of Corman. But *why*?? Did I say he was lazy? Not in a physical sense, perhaps, but Winner clearly doesn't give a good Goddam about the film, or the acting, or anything else other than showing every dollar spent of Sir Lew Grade's money in scenery, art direction, costume design, and even that *very* perfunctorily. EVERY, I said EVERY scene follows this TV sitcom rule: open wideshot, dolly a bit into it, then single close-ups back and forth, mostly keeping on the speaker. A few reactions. The whole thing is a two hour TV movie. By the third shot, I *KNEW* the film was a total loss. It has no centre, no core, no ambition, no vision. It's flat, distant, alienated (more so than CREATION OF THE HUMANOIDS, and that's saying something), and features a galaxy of miserable performances from a cast of fading stars. They all looked completely out of it, focusing on one thing: the end of their day's shooting. It looks like WHILE THE CITY SLEEPS, or Lang Gives Up, without *any* style at all; or Sam Newfield directing a film on a day when he couldn't make it to the studio, and had to phone in the direction. Sad to see Dudley Sutton, once hot in Furie's *The Leather Boys*, doing a short, shitty bit as a pug named Lanny. Mitchum tells Lanny to bug off, and he does, facing the fact he'll never make it as a star, into the night. Very sad. Richard Boone looks terrible, but does some of the few interesting bits in the film as Lash Canino; good delivery of lines, look s the part, the only new interpretation of a character. For the rest, ghastly; and Jimmy Stewart, *damn*! Hold those cards a bit closer, huh? The worst thing of course is that the '46 Hawks film is arguably *the* best gangster film ever made (*Scarface*, also Hawks, in there), and anyone with any spirit would have *jumped* at the chance to top Hawks, if they *could* do it. Now no one will try for another 40 years; by that time, we'll all be blown to bits.

--Wheeler Dixon

The Cinema: An Index of Directors 1929-1978

by Wheeler Dixon

("Since AFTA goes out to a wide variety of people, it would be presumptuous to assume that all of you have a firm knowledge of film, to the point of really appreciating the pivotal role a director plays in the conception and execution of a film. Since this article concerns itself quite directly with *directors*, it should, in all fairness be prefaced with some kind of explanation. Therefore, Wheeler's own preface on the role of the director and the "Auteurist Theory" of film production." --Bill-Dale)

ROLE OF THE DIRECTOR

In Auteurist Theory, the director is the most important person in every film, and this seems correct. The director is responsible for lighting, camerawork, direction of actors, costume design, set design, strategies of editing, and a host of other essentially *creative* chores: in addition he or she must also keep an eye on the budget, and keep production of the film rolling forward. Certain directors do this better than others: some are traffic cops, some explorers. It is also essential to Auteurist Theory, then, that certain directors are more interesting, *better* than others. But tastes change. Wyler in the 40's was a "genius", and Val Lewton (the only producer with the soul of a director) was a dumb hack to everyone but James Agee. Today, Wyler is in deserved eclipse, and Lewton is a minor saint. Many films which did very badly, critically and financially, on initial release, are today beginning to get some of the attention they so obviously deserve. Nor is the evaluation of film ever a closed case. It goes on, and on, and every new year revises entirely the history of the perception of film.

INTRODUCTION

"The need for an updated film history is self-evident." With these words, Andrew Sarris opened his *The American Cinema*, a seminal collection of mini-essays, in which he evaluated the talents of some 200 directors, mostly American. Since 1968, when the book first appeared (although it appeared in an abbreviated format in the Summer 1963 issue of Jonas Mekas' *Film Culture*, and was then expanded and updated for book length publication), a lot has happened in film. The 60's were a decade of continual expansion and artistic hange, and Sarris' book came at the apex of the decade. In his preface, Sarris noted that although there were several excellent histories of film, they all stopped in the 40's and 50's: none went into the 60's. Here we are in the 70's, and there is again a desperate need for an updated film history. Tastes have changed. Film styles have changed. What looked modern in 1968, now looks either classic or dated. And new directors have emerged. In Sarris' book, for example, Francis Ford Coppola is just a newcomer, who "may be heard from more decisively in the future." Then came the *Godfather* films. Joining Coppola were Bogdanovitch, Mutrux, Scorsese, Altman, and many other directors who were only bubbling under in the late 60's. All of these people have now advanced to the front rank (Mutrux most recently), and they deserve a place in the chronology. In addition, tastes have shifted radically, and directors who seemed to be assured of immortality have completely faded from view. Godard, for one. After 1968 and *Weekend*, really nothing. Ford's position, once assured, has come under fire recently, in the writings of the critics David Pirie and Todd McCarthy. Whole new areas of film have opened up. Terence Fisher, once dismissed as merely a maker of cheap horror movies, has been given a long-deserved place in the Pantheon of Directors. With the inclusion of Fisher, a host of other directors have come to light. It now no longer seems reasonable to limit any listing of directors to merely those who have worked principally in America. Cinema has become a world art. Too, videotape has completely altered the making of movies, cutting cost and post-production time, and often quality as well. The theatres are closing down, and the revival houses. Television is on the increase. Home video recorders have finally given the viewer the option of becoming *involved* with programming: saving films for playback at a later date, to be studied and enjoyed. And color has become a major economic factor. In 1968, one could still make a black and white film fairly routinely, although even then it was becoming a rarity. Today, black and white filmmaking is a lost art. Dollies have vanished from the filmic vocabulary, along with cranes and other complicated shots, to be replaced by zooms and the horrors of three camera television.

In short, our perceptions of what a movie is and what it does and looks like have changed considerably in the last ten years. Time, then, for a look at Sarris' work, and some tentative changes and suggestions, a few updates, in what remains an invaluable overall system for the organization and appreciation of the filmic art.

--Wheeler Dixon

PANTHEON DIRECTORS:

- Jean Renoir
- Terence Fisher
- D.W. Griffith
- Howard Hawks
- Alfred Hitchcock
- Andy Warhol
- Fritz Lang
- Roger Corman
- Carl Th. Dreyer
- Jean-Marie Straub
  (with Danielle Huillet)
- Luis Bunuel
- Roberto Rossellini
- Bresson/Cocteau

THE FAR SIDE OF PARADISE:

- Ernst Lubitsch
- Josef Von Sternberg
- Orson Welles
- Samuel Fuller

Freddie Francis
Joseph Losey
Nicholas Ray
Douglas Sirk
Eric Von Stroheim
Raoul Walsh
William Wellman
Don Siegel
Jacques Tourneur
Edgar G. Ulmer
Rene Clair
Sergei Eisenstein

THIRD RANK:

F.W. Murnau
Otto Preminger
Joseph Lewis
Francois Truffaut
James Whale
Tony Richardson
Francis Ford Coppola
Sam Peckinpah
Jerry Lewis
John Brahm

REPOSITIONED AND RE-EVALUATED:

Charles Chaplin
Buster Keaton
Robert Flaherty
John Ford
Max Ophuls

DISCOVERIES:

Don Sharp
Joseph Kane
William Beaudine
Wesley E. Barry
Ford Beebe
Spencer Gordon Bennett
William Witney
Tod Browning
William Castle
B. Reeves Eason
Ray Enright
Lambert Hillyer
Erle C. Kenton
Sam Newfield (aka Sherman Scott
Peter Stewart)
Lew Landers
Ida Lupino
Roy William Neill
Arch Oboler
Robert Siodmak
Ray Dennis Steckler (Cash Flagg)
Jean Yarbrough
Albert Zugsmith

Directors not mentioned in the previous listings are either unchanged in the output or critical reputation; or else they have declined so seriously that their impact has become completely negligible. For example, Chapters 5, 6, and 7 in particular are almost complete "as they were then"; and with the exception of those directors who have moved out of "Oddities, One Shots and New Comers", Chapters 8-10 also stand without much correction. The brief comments that follow on each director are not intended to be anything more than a brief updating: detailed analysis of the directors in question, their gifts, and their work, will have to come at a later, more objective date.

Since we do not, regretably, have the space here to give director's complete filmographies, we have limited ourselves to a few major works, as the filmographies found in Sarris, though occasionally incomplete and sometimes even factually inaccurate, are still eminently serviceable.

Films which, up until now, have not gotten the attention they deserved, are indicated with an asterix.

JEAN RENOIR About as close to Shakespeare as the Cinema gets. Renoir manages to keep himself out of the fil, even when he's in it. There's really no one who even gets close, so Renoir gets the nod as the most "humanistic" director around, except when he made Woman on the Beach, but then again, did you ever try working for the RKO "B" unit? With a boss named Jack Gross? And the only person who would talk to you is Val Lewton, in all of Hollywood? Renoir's other Hollywood films are undistinguished, with the exception of Diary of a Chambermaid, which is an honorable failure, and cost Burgess Meredith his shirt. His later films like French Can Can and The Golden Coach are ponderous bores, but his early work, particularly M. Lange, La Chienne, and Toni are absolutely luminous. Even his failures resonate far beyond just about everybody else's failures. Grand Illusion, though, is incredibly over-rated, and looks, as the critic Mark Gibbons noted, like a "Republic serial without the chapter titles."

1924: La Fille del'Eau
1926: Nana
1928: La Petite Marchande d'Allumettes
1929: La Petite Chaperon Rouge
1931: La Chienne
1932: La Nuit du Carrefour, Boudu Sauve des Eaux
1934: Toni, Madame Bovary
1935: La Crime de Monsieur Lange
1936: La Vie Est A Nous*, Une Partie de Campagne, Les Bas Fonds*
1937: La Marseillaise*
1938: La Bete Humaine
1939: La Regle de Jeu* (so marked because it seems inexhaustible)
1946: Diary of a Chambermaid
1947: The Woman on the Beach* (This, for me, is Renoir's masterwork.)
1961: Dr. Cordelier

TERENCE FISHER The most disgracefully neglected career in the cinema. Fisher entered the industry as a clapper boy at the age of 28, and directed his first film in his middle 40's. Now 74, Fisher will probably never make another film. David Pirie's remarkable book, Heritage of Horror, has a chapter on him, one of the first critical mentions of Fisher's films. Though work on his career has just begun, he is a figure of such inescapably major stature that one can only attribute his present Subterranean status to an advanced state of critical myopia. (All of these films might be marked well be marked with an asterix.)

1947: To The Public Danger
1949: The Astonished Heart (with Anthony Darnborough)
1949: So Long at the Fair (with Anthony Darnborough)
1951: Stolen Face, Distant Trumpet
1952: The Four Sided Triangle
1953: Blood Orange

Terence Fisher (continued)

1954: The Stranger Came Home, The Flaw, Mark of Dust, Final Appointmen
1955: Stolen Assignment, The Last Man to Hang
1956: Kill Me Tomorrow, The Curse of Frankenstein
1957: Horror of Dracula, The Revenge of Frankenstein
1958: The Hound of the Baskervilles, The Man Who Could Cheat Death
1959: The Mummy, Stranglers of Bombay, The Two Faces of Dr. Jekyll
1960: The Brides of Dracula, The Curse of the Werewolf
1963: The Gorgon
1964: The Earth Dies Screaming
1965: Dracula, Prince of Darkness
1966: Frankenstein Created Woman
1967: The Devil Rides Out
1969: Frankenstein Must Be Destroyed
1972: Frankenstein and the Monster from Hell

D.W. GRIFFITH

For years dismissed as a hasbeen who couldn't keep up with the times. In fact, Griffith had made his statement in silents, and his sound work (Abraham Lincoln, The Struggle) was just compulsive movie making by a man in love with cinema, but long since run out of initial inspiration. He directed hundreds of short films between 1908-1914, when he began to devote most of his energy to features. Griffith's style was purely visual: he had no track to prop up his weaker moments. One can see his "information booth" style of camerawork in Ford, later on; though Ford lacked both Griffith's visual audacity and simplicity. Listing the shorts even partially would take up two pages; here I concentrate on features. The shorts are gorgeous, though: compact, epigrammatic.

1914: The Avenging Conscience (short), The Mother and the Law
1915: Birth of A Nation
1916: Intolerance
1918: Hearts of the World, The Greatest Thing in Life
1919: The Girl Who Stayed At Home, Broken Blossoms, True Heart Susie, The Mother and the Law (remake), The Greatest Question
1920: The Idol Dancer*, The Love Flower*, Way Down East
1921: Dream Street*
1922: Orphans of the Storm
1923: The White Rose*
1924: America*, Isn't Life Wonderful?
1925: Sally of the Sawdust* (with W.C. Fields)
1926: Sorrows of Satan*
1928: The Drums of Love*
1929: Lady of the Pavements*

HOWARD HAWKS

Though currently the most overrated of the major directors, Hawks has a real, if not particularly prolific, career in films. His best work was done in the '30's and '40's; as with John Ford, he apparently didn't know whe to step down.

1928: A Girl in Every Port
1929: Trent's Last Case*
1930: The Dawn Patrol
1931: The Criminal Code
1932: The Crowd Roars, Scarface, Tiger Shark*
1933: Today We Live
1934: Twentieth Century
1935: Barbary Coast
1936: Ceiling Zero*, The Road To Glory
1943: Air Force*
1946: The Big Sleep* (probably Hawks' masterpiece)
1948: Red River
1965: Red Line:7000* (Many things wrong: worth the effort to wade through them. A deeply flawed and personal statement.)

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

The most visually didactic of the major directors, and often meaninglessly tricky in his poorer films; when audience interest flags, he resorts to tricky crosscutting and showy visual effects, as in Saboteur. His best films are quiet, flowing, and completely self-assured. By 1935, he had firmly hit his stride: he was to keep it until 1960, and Psycho. Psycho, along with Secret Agent, Strangers on a Train, Rear Window, Vertigo, Lifeboat, and Spellbound, represent Hitchcock's supreme achievements. He is indeed the supreme technicians of the cinema, and even at his least motivated, his style represents a glorious throwback to an age of craftsmanship which is vanishing almost completely. And Family Plot is much, much better than most people give it credit for. You should try filming a car chase at age 70. Instead of master of suspense, how about master of montage? It's true, and he's certainly much warmer in it than Eisenstein, and uses camera movement quite frequently, instead of sticking with static set-up gracefully intercut.

Alfred Hitchcock (continued)

1925: The Pleasure Garden*
1926: The Lodger*
1927: Downhill*, Easy Virtue*
1929: Blackmail
1930: Murder
1932: East of Shanghai*
1935: The Man Who Knew Too Much, The 39 Steps
1936: Secret Agent
1937: Sabotage
1938: The Lady Vanishes, A Girl Was Young
1939: Jamaica Inn*
1940: Rebecca
1941: Suspicion
1943: Shadow of A Doubt
1944: Lifeboat
1945: Spellbound
1946: Notorious
1948: Rope*
1951: Strangers on a Train
1953: I Confess
1954: Rear Window
1958: Vertigo
1959: North by Northwest
1960: Psycho
1976: Family Plot*

ANDY WARHOL One of the major masters of the American Sound film, who started making silent features in 1962-3. First films were Eat, Sleep, Haircut, Blowjob. 1964 saw Empire, and the completion of Sleep. In 1964 as well, Warhol began his sound film cycle with Camp, a not particularly distinguished film. But then, Warhol began making, along with Bud Wirrschfter, Gerard Malanga, and his scenarist Ron Tavel, a feature film a day. This continued through 1966, and culminated in The Chelsea Girls, Warhol's supreme achievement. From here, Warhold began working on 4 Stars, a 25 hour epic which was shown just once in 1967. Then Valerie Solanis shot him, Warhol lost interest in film, and turned the whole thing over to the utterly pedestrian and talentless Paul Morrissey, who has since managed to become something of a commercial success. Warhol goes on record with the dubious distinction of having the shortest major filmic career in cinema's history. Titles listed below are just the tip of the iceberg: between 1964-1966, Warhol made something like 250 feature films.

1964: Empire, Hedy The Shoplifter
1965: Vinyl, My Hustler, Eating Too Fast, Kitchen, Bitch, Suicide, Afternoon, The Duchess, Their Town: Toby Short, many others.
1966: The Chelsea Girls

FRITZ LANG Lang died recently, without having made a film in over 15 years. A shame. His last The 1000 Eyes of Dr. Mabuse, moved at a rather stately pace when put alongside Metropolis, to be sure, but Lang certainly could have given us 3 or 4 more classics if he'd had the backing. Lang's career is incredibly uneven: he can give us a Scarlet Street, and descend to the depths of While The City Sleeps, where only John Barrymore, Jr. as the psychokiller excites his imagination. His Dr. Mabuse series is brilliant: particularly the first silent, serial-like 4 hour incarnation. His view of the world is particularly nasty, dark and vicios, but he imbues all his protagonists with such energy that one feels that they live more than most of us, despite their predestination to doom. His appearance in Contempt by Godard in 1963-4 as himself is a fitting and beautiful capper to a career as the cinema's ultimate pragmatist. M & Spione, though are quite overrated.

1919: Die Spinnen (Pt. 1)*
1920: Die Spinnen (Pt. 2)*, Das Wanderdnde Bild
1921: Der Mude Tod*
1922: Dr. Mabuse, Der Spieler*
1924: Die Niebelungen
1926: Metropolis
1928: Frau im Mond
1932: Das Testament von Dr. Mabuse
1933: Liliom*
1936: Fury
1937: You Only Live Once
1941: Western Union, Manhunt
1943: Hangmen Also Die
1945: Ministry of Fear, The Woman in the Window, Scarlett Street*** (Unquestionably Lang's greatest year.)
1948: Secret Beyond the Door*
1950: House by the River*
1952: Clash by Night*
1953: The Blue Gardenia*, The Big Heat (Though again, much overrated)
1954: Human Desire*
1956: Beyond a Reasonable Doubt*

Fritz Lang (continued)

1961: The 1000 Eyes of Dr. Mabuse
1963-4: appears as himself in Godard's Contempt* (best performance ever by a director playing himself: a real key to Lang's work)

ROGER CORMAN

Along with Fisher, another undeservedly neglected master of the cinema. In American Cinema, Sarris gives him no more than marginal attention, citing The Masque of The Red Death as Corman's best work, when in fact it is one of the poorest, most mannered and pretentious pieces. This is a fundamental misreading of Corman's intent. By the time of the Poe films, Corman was already into a decline of stylish decadence, assisted by Daniel Haller, his brilliant set designer, and Floyd Crosby, probably the last director of photography in Hollywood who knew how to set up a classical dolly shot. Corman's real contribution was made the 50's and very early 60's, with cheap black and white films made for the then newly formed AIP. Corman never cared about the physical realities of the set, nor could he afford to care about the acting: he cared about the ideas expressed, and poured out his philosophy in more than 25 films in 5 years. This can be no more than a poor introduction to the magnitude of Corman's accomplishment: I recommend Will and Willeman' Edinburgh Monograph on him, as well as my own piece in the Summer 1976 issue of The Velvet Light Trap, In Defense of Roger Corman. Corman is a complex case, entirely working by his own rules, but possessed of a dark and profound American moral vision, not unlike Lang's, and certainly more persistent and accomplished than Ray's, save Party Girl and Rebel Without a Cause. Corman's key is that he operates on the same level as his protagonists: it is this which is objected to, because it gives the audience no way out. Sarris' filmography of Corman is woefully inaccurate. See "Kings of the Bs", Flynn and McCarthy, Editors, Dutton.

1955: Five Guns West*, Apache Woman*
1956: Swamp Woman*, The Gunslinger*, Oklahoma Woman*
1957: Naked Paradise*, The Undead*, Rock All Night*, Carnival Rock*, Teenage Doll*, Sorority Girl*, The Viking Women and the Sea Serpent* (Corman's best year. Undead & Teenage Doll are among his finest, most trenchant work.)
1958; War of the Satellites*, Machine Gun Kelly*, Teenage Caveman*, She Gods of Shark Reef*. (Not a bad year, either.)
1959: I, Mobster*, The Wasp Woman*, A Bucket of Blood*.
1960: The House of Usher*, The Little Shop of Horrors*, The Last Woman on Earth*
1961: The Pit and the Pendulum* (Finest of the Poes, with Usher.)
1962: Premature Burial, The Intruder*
1963: The Terror*
1967: The St. Valentine's Day Massacre*, The Trip*
1971: Von Richtofen and Brown*

Most of the above are starred for the simple reason that, particularly with the early black and whites, re-evaluation is so crucial that until these works (esp. the 1956-57 films) are well known, Corman simply will not be fully understood.

CARL TH. DREYER

Dreyer is popularly known as a stern, almost calvanistic moralist, whose later, severly disciplined films supposedly betray a stern, uncompromising sensibility worthy of Cotton Mather. Nothing could be further from the truth. Dreyer is a disciplined romantic, whose Gertrud (unhappily, no longer available in the U.S.) is a fitting end to a luminous, transcendant, truly mystic career. One only wishes the Danish government had given him a movie studio rather than a movie theatre. And, of course, Vampyr is one of the cinema's greatest Gothic romances. Notice all of Dreyer's films are starred. All deserve closer attention.

1919: Praesidenten*, Leaves From Satan's Book*
1922: Once Upon A Time*
1924: Mikael* (Dreyer's first completely accomplished work)
1925: Du Skal Aere Din Hustru*, Glomdalsbruden*
1927: The Passion of Joan of Arc*
1932: Vampyr*
1943: Day of Wrath*
1944: Two People* (Dreyer's least successful feature, still quite worthwhile)
1948: They Caught the Ferry* (Short)
1954: Ordet*
1964: Gertrud* (One of the most beautiful films ever made by anyone)

JEAN MARIE STRAUB (W/DANIELLE HUILLET)

Another strange case, for two reasons. First, Jean and Danielle form the first really equal partnership of consequence between a husband and wife in film. They take turns directing, an have been together from the start. In recent years, Jean has stepped increasingly out of th spotlight, content to produce while Danielle directs. Second, Jean and Danielle made their mark in 6 films. It is unlikely that they will do much more. As with Corman, Straub is interested more in deas than props: lately, this impatience has led him to sloppiness. But his work in the 60's stands firmly in the 70's, and will probably hold up well 40 years hence. Straub is difficult to understand, and will still be unfolding his secrets to us many years from now.

1963: Machorka-Muff (short)
1965: Not Reconciled (Featurette, 50 mins.)
1968: The Chronicle of Anna Magdelena Bach (feature)
1968: The Bridgegroom, The Comedienne and The Pimp (Short)
1969: Othon (feature)
1973: History Lessons (feature)

LUIS BUNUEL

Considered for too long merely a sensationalistic shockmaster, Bunuel's craft developed first under private patronage with L'Age D'Or, then went through a long and humiliating apprenticeship at The Museum of Modern Art, where he worked until the late 40's and finally fled to Mexico to make films, any films. As with so many talented but difficult filmmakers, he found that he could obtain work only by directing poverty row quickies: the more conventional directors, being safer, got the better budgets. Bunuel nevertheless jumped in and began cranking them out with enthusiasm, and hit his stride with Los Olvidados. Since then, he has simply been getting better with every passing year. In 1978, it seems faintly ironic that of all the filmmakers working today, only Hitchcock and Bunuel have any real ideas to offer, at least compared to garbagemen like Bogdanovitch, Friedkin, and Spielberg. It is rumored that Bunuel is a hopeless alcoholic between pictures, and it would seem that he has justification.

1928: Fall of the House of Usher, Un Chien Andalou.
1929: L'Age D'or (released 1930).
1932: Land Without Bread
1950: Los Olvidados, Susana*
1951: Daughter of Deceit*, Ascent to Heaven*
1952: Robinson Crusoe*
1953: Wuthering Heights*, Illusion Travels by Streetcar*
1954: The River and Death*
1955: The Criminal Life of Archibaldo Cruz*
1958: Nazarin
1960: The Young One
1961: Viridiana
1962: The Exterminating Angel
1965: Diary of A Chambermaid, Simon of the Desert (though overrated)
1967: Belle de Jour
1969: The Milky Way
1972: The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeosie*
1974: The Phantom of Liberty
1977: That Obscure Object of Desire

ROBERTO ROSSELLINI

Also dead recently. Rossellini's brooding early work was best known in 1968; since that time, he became the most successful director of films for television the medium has known. Starting in 1966 with The Rise to Power of Louis XIV, Rossellini began to make films for RAI Italian Network TV at an incredible rate, almost as fast as Corman made films in 1956-7. Incredibly, they were all brilliant, and they got better and better with each succeeding film. His Blaise Pascal is one of the glories of the cinema. Rossellini adopted a technique of long takes combined with fluid dollywork which allowed him to get a lot done quickly (essential for TV), and yet his choice of subject matter and actors assured him that the end product would not seem hasty or poorly executed. More than anyone else, Rossellini has shown us that TV movies need not look like Charlie's Angels, and that "culture" need not look like Masterpiece Theatre. He went right on working up to his death, and one can only thank God he had the last ten years to develop this art to such a skillful peak. With TV rapidly supplanting theatrical exhibition, and inflation driving the cost of moviemaking straight out of sight, Rossellini's last work is an example to us all.

1945: Open City
1946: Paisan
1947-8: L'Amore
1949: The Flowers of St. Francis
1950: Stromboli
1953: Voyage in Italy
1954: Joan at the Stake, Fear
1959: General della Rovere
1966: The Rise to Power of Louis XIV
1967-77: TV Films, including Blaise Pascal, The Age of Medici, and many others. All produced by RAI-TV; available in US through Audio-Brandon.

ROBERT BRESSON/JEAN COCTEAU

Though both of these filmmakers displayed great talent, by themselves they were often so self-indulgent as to obscure their point. They are listed here for one film they made together in 1944: Les Dames du Bois de Boulogne. Cocteau did the vicious scenario, and except for Les Parents Terrible and sections of The Eagle Has Two Heads, he has never written a better one; Bresson directed, probably with great interference from Cocteau, and except for his early solo films, Pickpocket and The Trial of Jeanne D'Arc, he has never been less self-indulgent. Here, too, the film was made in occupied Paris (the studio wasn't heated, and you can see the breath condensing in front of the actors' mouths in apartment sequences), and one can't help but feel that all of the various hardships imposed because of this worked to their advantage. Brilliant performances by all concerned, particularly the amazing Maris Casares, then just 21.

1944: Les Dames du Bois de Boulogne.

THE FAR SIDE OF PARADISE

Here, for the sake of space, until such time as I have the room to expand these comments into something more complete, I will confine myself to a few remarks, omit filmographies, and speak only of a few important aspects of each directors' work. Often, Sarris' comments here do not require amendment: Ernst Lubitsch, Josef Von Sternberg, Orson Welles, Samuel Fuller, Joseph Losey, Micholas Ray, Douglas Sirk, Eric Von Stroheim, Raoul Walsh, William Wellman, Don Siegel, Rene Clair and Sergei Eisenstein will all have to wait until a later date for complete analysis. Their case has been adequately and skillfully taken up elsewhere, although Clair, Wellman, Siegel, Ray and Fuller were consigned by Sarris to a lower circle they emphatically did not deserve, and Orson Welles apparently made it into Sarris' pantheon on sheer strength of bluster. For those, however, who are newcomers to the circle, a few words of welcome.

FREDDIE FRANCIS

A self-confessed hack, Francis nevertheless got better performances out of Oliver Reed than anyone save Fisher, and though his most recent work has been abysmal, his work in the early to middle 60's is a personal testment of the highest, most compact order. Paranoiac, for example, has not a wasted set-up or line in it. One suspects that Francis' confession of hackery is motivated more by a desire to be left alone to get on with it than anything else.

1962: Paranoiac*, Nightmare*
1964: Hysteria, Dr. Terror's House of Horrors
1966: The Skull
1968: Torture Garden

JOSEPH LOSEY

Just a quick note that one of Losey's finest films is The Damned, a brilliant film which kicked off the whole Children of the Damned cycle, made in 1961. In fact, except for The Servant and Accident (his finest color film), he has never come close to equalling it.

JACQUES TOURNEUR

Through bad, bad luck and bad management, Tourneur never really got to make the films he could have. His Comedy of Terrors, though an honorable failure (he had 10 days to do it, and what can you do with that?), has such a kind air of gentility and breeding that one only wishes AIP had used him more often. (Screenplay writer Richard Matheson got him that job, against AIP's wishes. Even when Tourneur brought it in on time and budget, AIP never used him again, for no apparent reason. Lorre, Karloff, Price, and Rathbone, all together in a film for the last time, adored him.) Tourneur's finest work was for the producer Val Lewton (see the Renoir listing), who produced a series of superb fantasy films for RKO in the 40's was called by James Agee at the time the "most gifted film artist we now possess in America." Most people also point to Out of the Past, and though it's a great film (Kirk Douglas and Mitchum have seldom been better), it seems to me to pull back from the real center of film noir, unlike The Big Sleep, which bullies its' way to the inevitable, vicious conclusion. Out of the Past is ultimately too sentimental to be vicious, and it comes off as posturing without any violence, physical or mental, to back it up. And no, I'm not kidding about Nick Carter. It's a superb film

1939: Nick Carter, Master Detective*
1940: Phantom Riders*
1942: Cat People (though overrated)
1943: I Walked With A Zombie* (one of Tourneur's best), The Leopard Man*
1944: Experiment Perilous
1946: Canyon Passage
1947: Out of the Past
1953: Appointment in Honduras*
1956: Nightfall*
1958: Curse of the Demon*, The Fearmakers*
1963: The Comedy of Terrors (with reservations, above).

EDGAR G. ULMER

Like Corman, Ulmer saw that only by working in the depths of Poverty Row could he get to do all that he wanted. And he knew, like Corma that this would probably consign him to limbo. But it's long overdue to bring him back fro exile, and to see more clearly that it isn't sets and props that matter, or even performances, in certain cases, where priorities are established that say "5 days---$40,000--finished cutti in 2 weeks." If Ulmer could do that, he could tow the line, and do anything he wanted. As Ulmer noted in a 1972 interview, this ultimately ruined him everywhere else, as PRC, Ulmer's homebase studio, was probably Hollywood's cheapest, worse than Republic or even Monogram. Bu truly appreciating Ulmer's work, stripping away the considerations of cheap sets and rotten acting, getting at the core of the work, the ideas expressed, reveals Ulmer more than just a stylist: Ulmer was, and is, an artist, not not some sick house joke, which he has been for much too long. Here, I mention mostly his PRC work, discounting simply for space his work earlier in Germany, and his Black Cat for Universal.

1942: Tomorrow We Live*
1943: My Son the Hero, Girls in Chains*, Isle of Forgotten Sins*
1944: Bluebeard (though overrated)
1945: Strange Illusion* (Out of the Night).
1946: Club Havana, Detour, The Wife of Monte Cristo, Her Sister's Secret. (Ulmer's finest year. Detour is simply incredible, as is Havana.)

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by Wheeler Dixon (continued)

Edgar G. Ulmer (continued)

1946: Club Havana, Detour, The Wife of Monte Cristo, Her Sister's Secret (Ulmer's finest year. Detour is simply incredible, as is Havana.)
1955: Murder Is My Beat*, The Naked Dawn*
1957: The Perjurer*

THIRD RANK

Again, I will have to limit myself to a few comments. Murnau is here because his perfectionism limited (or compensated for) his lack of output, which limits appreciation of his work. (Ulmer started out with Murnau, incidentally: interesting that Ulmer should work so quicly, and Murnau work so painstakingly as to render his films perfect but ultimately dead at the center); Preminger, Truffaut (currently hopelessly overrated, as only 400 Blows and Day for Night really deserve canonization), Richardson (simply for Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner, though dated, worthy of inclusion here by virtue of its' human perception and ambition) Peckinpah (self-indulgent but worthwhile), Jerry Lewis (the French have a point), John Brahm (again more than just a stylist, though nowhere near Ulmer), and Whale (too arch, finicky, and stage-bound to really break through in film; see Ernest Thesiger's Dr. Praetorious in The Bride of Frankenstein as Whale's ultimate on-screen persona) are here because they all fall short of real, continual artistic committment. Coppola here is an entertainer with semi-artistic overtones; when he strays from gothicism (Dementia 13) and gangsterism (the Godfather films) he becomes pretentious, strident and obvious (The Rain People, The Conversation). Of all these, Truffaut has the best disguise: ultimately, though, he is just a gushy sentimentalist, who also happens to be a compulsive moviemaker. It is interesting that his two best films are his two most deeply felt: 400 Blows about his childhood, and then 2 black and white entertainments, Piano Player and Jules et Jim; after a long dry spell, he reveals his love for film in Day for Night, because he now cares, obviously, only about filmmaking as a life and process. He undoubtedly has more to say, but until he permits himself to feel something rather than sentimentalize it, we'll just have to wait and see.

REPOSITIONED AND REEVALUATED

Here we come to the trickiest section. I cannot possibly hope to do justice to the task at hand here in the space allotted to me; in any event, the ideas expressed here will probably strike quite a few as being revolutionary at best and irresponsible at worst. For those of you who feel with me, and I know there are some of you out there; I know, it must feel good to have some decent sense of priorities re-established. For those of you who are shocked or offended, well, I'll be glad to debate you anytime. Obviously, I can't anticipate all your arguments, and if I attempted to present both sides of the question, I would be incomplete and probably unfair to your critical evaluation. Suffice it to say, however, that these five directors have been consistently overrated in the 60's, particularly John Ford, and that for many of us, their canonization seems to us just as offensive, unwarranted, unjust and inaccurate as the observations that follow may seem to some. These are a few thoughts.

CHARLES CHAPLIN

A superb mime, certainly; but a filmmaker? No. Chaplin's art is merely judicious recording. In his later films, he gave way to sentimental notions of persecution and grandiosity. This is not to take away from his brilliance as a comic force, and particularly his early silent shorts, which are economical, and often very, very funny. But The Gold Rush is tedious and overpolished; and Modern Times is simply a poor plagerism of Clair's A Nous La Liberte, (a much better film.) The Great Dictator has the marvelous section with the globe, which is sheer poetry; but the end speech accurately betrays what is wrong with Chaplin's sensibility. He is a sentimentalist, a propogandist, unwilling to see things accurately, distanced by his own decision, placed at the head of his own Pantheon by his artistic isolationism. Compare Dictator with To Be Or Not To Be, and the problem is obvious. Chaplin's theme was always misunderstood Chaplin: We're supposed to feel sorry for him, while he feels superior to us, lecturing us that we just don't understand what he's up to. But we do. And in his later years, that something is boring, irritating, and completely out of touch with film, humanity, or anything else but his own ego.

BUSTER KEATON

Keaton, again, is a superb comedian. Again, he is NOT a filmmaker. One feels much sorrier for Keaton than Chaplin; after all, Chaplin died rich, Keaton died pretty broke, though appreciated anew in the 60's for the superb comic he was and is. The only problem here is that he is, again, simply a judicious documentarian as a filmmaker, which was all that his art required. I am sure he would resist the tag of filmmaker-genius as much as he deserves the tag of comic-genius. Do we have that straight? Brilliant comedian, yes, absolutely, without any qualification. Brilliant filmmaker, no. For an example of someone who HAD a brilliant sense of the filmic possibilities of human body motion, in timing and camera placement, see Leni Riefenstahl in Olympia, particularly Pt. II. Riefenstahl was not a comic filmmaker, obviously, but she was sensitive to timing and the motion of the human body in space (the essence of Keaton's comedy) in a way that Keaton himself probably appreciated. Too bad they never worked together, though it would have been impossible.

ROBERT FLAHERTY

A great documentarian, certainly. But a Pantheon director? Nuts! A pioneer, certainly. An excellent filmmaker, an original, a realist, a romantic manipulator, certainly. But one of the top filmmakers of all time? Simply, no.

JOHN FORD

Here, of course, we come to the most serious situation. Ford is the most overrated filmmaker of the century. For those of us who adhere to this view, Ford is nothing more than a competent workman, something Ford himself

John Ford (continued)

always insisted he was, and someone who could be counted on to bring the picture in on time and on budget. Ford's own favorite film, The Sun Shines Bright, is a beautiful piece of work: for the rest, tragic overinflation of a filmmaker's intent and accomplishment. Treating this case with the utmost gravity, I really cannot go into greater detail here. To accurately argue this case, a case crucial to the future of cinema, would require, in view of Ford's accumulated critical acclaim, a book, and a long one at that. Nevertheless, I simply state here that Ford's canonization is one of the most unsubstantiated, dangerous and damaging critical acts of the film in 20th Century, an injustice which severly limits the established critical view of all film by holding up Ford as an aberrant example. I recognize fully that Sarris, and many others, are not being critical dandies when they place Ford next to Renoir as one of the century's great filmmakers. I hope that they will recognize that I, and many others, just as seriously maintain that this is madness, a serious mistake, and that to compare Ford to Renoir on equal terms is like comparing Mickey Spillane to Norman Mailer: there just IS no basis for comparison. One is a competent storyteller, the other an artist. This question will be argued for decades, I guess, until those of us offended by Ford's current unwarranted reputation finally feel that, at least, we have been able to have our case satisfactorily put before the public. You will notice Ford missing from the Pantheon. You will notice Fisher in his place. Until the Fordians can come to their senses and realize that Fisher is the equal, (and in my mind, the clear superior) of Ford, he will stay there. The most dangerous part of the Ford cult is the fact that Ford's reputation seems to exist at the expense of the Fisherian sensibility. While I realize I may be accused of replacing one act of critical fascism for another one, it is the best one can do, for the present, to call attention to a long overdue day of reckoning. Pirie's central thesis in Heritage is that the "horror" genre is the only staple cinematic myth which Britain can properly claim as its own, and which relates to Britain in the same way as the Western relates to America. As Ford is to the Western, then, Fisher is to the gothic romance. Both use these frameworks merely as springboards for their own concerns. Fordians, we will give you Ford if you want him, only when Fisher is given his proper place at his side. Sarris may counter that The American Cinema is a book on the American Cinema, not the British and World Cinema, but as I said at the start of this article, this seems a damaging and arbitrary distinction.

MAX OPHULS

Nervous toetapping Viennese pastry. Really, another dangerously overinflated and precious sensibility, one which seems obvious, ponderous, pretentious and disastrously recidivistic. Again, a book would be required to accurately state the case, in view of his current critical reputation.

DISCOVERIES

Here, I will have to be briefest of all. Most of these are footnote directors, interesting but ultimately not earthshaking. However, in certain cases, they are deserving of far more attention than they are currently getting, particularly Joseph Kane (over 150 Westerns, and not a word about him critically, just one interview in Kings of the "B"s), William Castle (never taken seriously, something Castle himself encouraged us NOT to do when he was alive with all his showmanship and gimmickry), Sam Newfield (so prolific that his studio, PRC, forced him to use two aliases because they were ashamed of his amazing output, over 200 films, and again, nothing written about him at ALL), and Spencer Gordon Bennett and William Witney, directors, often in tandem on the same film, for Republic.

Don Sharp: Interesting British Gothic director who will undoubtedly be heard from in the future; Joseph Kane, interestingly a fan of John Ford's, and a friend, who directed scores of Westerns for Republic, many of them miserable, but some of them brilliant, and completely underserving of the critical oblivion to which he has been doomed (though the interview in "B"s goes a long way towards correcting that; Kane is a great talker, and a pragmatist, you love him instinctively, and he has nothing but good to say about everyone, the sign of a truly generous artist); William Beaudine, director of over 100 films with nothing yet written about him; Wesley E. Barry, director of Creation of the Humanoids, probably one of the most difficult and trenchant SF films ever made (which you can't even rent in color, available only in B/W from Select Films, NYC); Ford Beebe, competent action director for Universal and others, who deserves a critical study; Spencer Gordon Bennett and William Witney, directors of hundreds of serials, whose 40's work for Republic has never been taken seriously because it was aimed at children, but has much to teach us about camera movement, use of music, lighting, dolly work, and montage and who deserve a GREAT deal of research; Tod Browning, a stagebound director who nevertheless had something to say about Horror and though not mainline, or even a important as, say, Kane or Witney or Benne again deserves a critical evaluation far in excess of what he's had so far; William Castle, who directed "B" films for Harry Cohn at Columbia in the 40's, then direct When Strangers Marry on loan out, a brilliant treatment of big city alienation and brutalization, then went one better in hi series of self-produced Gothies in the 50's and 60's, most particularly his House on Haunted Hill, Homicidal, and Straitjack B. Reeves Eason, who directed hundreds of action films and the burning of Atlanta sequence in Gone With the Wind, and never got the credit; Ray Enright, a rather ordinary director still deserving of at least one good critical look; Lambert Hillyer, director of silent comedies and sound serials, also worthy of one good evaluation; Erle C. Kenton, ditto, especially for his last 2 films, the incredibly compact and evocative House of Frankenst

THE CINEMA: AN INDEX OF DIRECTORS 1929-1978
by Wheeler Dixon (continued)

and House of Dracula; Sam Newfield, simply because with more than 200 films, there isn't ONE WORD written about him anywhere, and most of his work is becoming perilously close to being lost forever; Lew Landers, ditto with a vengeance; Ida Lupino, because though she herself says that she just started directing because it fell in her lap, there's much more there than she's willing to admit; Roy William Neill, because for sense of timing, sense of place and atmosphere created in a studio, he has never been equalled (though his plots were often pedestrian, his visual sensibility is entirely unique, and unexplored); Arch Oboloer, because Bewitched is a much better film than Five; Robert Siodmak, because Son of Dracula is an excellent film, and no one has written anything about his subsequent work in Germany; Ray Dennis Steckler (aka Cash Flagg), because he works in the depths of Hollywood's cellars, yet even though he chooses repellent subjects and sensational titles, he's obviously not an exploitation filmmaker, yet no writing on him exists; Jean Yarbrough, for a hundred films and not a word written; and finally Albert Zugsmith for, among other things, Confessions of An Opium Eater, with the most effective drug hallucination sequence ever photographed.

And this is just a beginning. The main point is that no one exists at the expense of somebody else: everyone in film exists together. Value judgements can and must be made, but not as disguised exclusionary tactics. I wish to thank Bill-Dale Marcinko for his kindness and enthusiasm in running this, and Dennis Coleman, for having excellent taste (see his article on Fisher's Earth Dies Screaming and Freddie Francis on the next page)

--Wheeler Dixon
March/April 1978

64 Lawrence Av., Highland Park, NJ 08904

("Wheeler teaches at Rutgers University, in fact he is teaching a summer course in film in the month of July, and is showing some excellent films, daily, at 9:00a.m. If anyone is interested in attending, you are welcome to..." --Bill-Dale)

("Dennis Coleman, whose own column follows shortly, wrote this letter of comment on Wheeler's article. I run it with Wheeler's reply following..." -Bill-Dale)

Wheeler:

I agree with you wholeheartedly. I'll give you Hawks. I do have things chalked up against Griffith, but most of the films you have starred by him as important I have not seen, so maybe I just ought to keep my big mouth shut. (I do feel that BIRTH OF A NATION and BROKEN BLOSSOMS and maybe INTOLERANCE are vastly overrated.) I feel shaky about Hitchcock--and I'm probably the only one in existence who does. But his coldness, his anti-spontaneity and his stifling must-have-perfection attitude help to give me some doubts. Even PSYCHO has its problems.

Maybe you should have done some stuff against Altman and DePalma and Scorsese (minus TAXI DRIVER), but length is the limiting factor here. (And who is this Mutrux? I've only seen his AMERICAN HOT WAX,and was not really very impressed...)

If you're not just doing American directors, you left many foreign artistes out. But, again, length...Still, I think maybe a little more on Riefenstahl and at least a couple of lines on Jean Vigo. How about Mario Bava?

A few other things:

I feel Eisenstein deserves better; Castle deserves much more than a DISCOVERY (Hell, I'd put him in THE FAR SIDE OF PARADISE); Browning might deserve a little more; and Roy William Neill also (a personal favorite of mine); I would have mentioned Richard Lester (I think he's more than just the STRAINED SERIOUSNESS Sarris gives him); and why not a word on Gene Fowler, Jr.?

That's about it. It looks real good, you bet.

--Dennis Coleman

Gene Fowler, Jr. (Lang's cutter for years, and director of the much underappreciated I WAS A TEENAGE WEREWOLF and I MARRIED A MONSTER FROM OUTER SPACE), does definitely deserve a mention. Altman and DePalma and Scorsese (minus TAXI DRIVER) are worthy of sustained attack--STRAINED SERIOUSNESS if ever there was. Lester, no. Sorry. You're probably right about Mutrux. Many thanks for your thoughts.

Yours,

Wheeler

("Dennis is the major domo of the much-maligned Rutgers U. Science Fiction Club, whose sole purpose is to spend money renting classic, but unappreciated horror films and trying to pass them off to the members as science fiction ("But look, it has a spaceship in it!!!")

a column by dennis coleman

CREATURE FEATURES

The subject of this column is the fantastic film. Not the big-bidget, well know, critically acclaimed fantastic film. Not the mammoth science fiction spectacles or the new arty forays into shock and horror--though I'm sure some of those will creep in on the sidelines. The main concern here is the little guy, the films lost in the shuffle and quickly forgotten. This includes both the oldies but goodies (oh, I dunno, say something like INVADERS FROM MARS or CREATION OF THE HUMANOIDS) and the new breed (perhaps EATEN ALIVE or STARSHIP INVASIONS). I may praise them, I may bury them, but I at least want to call them to your attention. I mean, anybody can find all the criticism they want on CARRIE or CLOSE ENCOUNTERS, or VAMPYR or THINGS TO COME, but these are only a small portion of the general product. I want to bring out the rareties, the discards, the unknowns (or at least close-to-unknowns) for inspection. (I'm sure, however, that when a four-star classic like HORROR OF DRACULA or BRIDE OF FRANKENSTEIN comes my way again I won't be able to resist jumping in head first--even now I am sorely tempted to throw all my plans out the window and get into Corman's A BUCKET OF BLOOD and LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS, but patience, patience...all things in their turn.) So, without further ado, on to today's topic for discussion.

We all know (or should know) that budget has very little to do with the aesthetic quality of a film. With care, with love, with imagination, the cheapest film can be transformed into something quite beautiful. Thus we have THE EARTH DIES SCREAMING...

THE EARTH DIES SCREAMING, despite its ludicrous title, is a quiet, lyrical little science fiction/horror opus. It was made by Terence Fisher for Robert L. Lippert in 1964 on a very low budget indeed. (In an interview in LITTLE SHOPPE OF HORRORS #3 Fisher simply says it's "a very, very cheap film.") Oddly enough, the cast includes a number of old pros: Thorley Walters, Virginia Field, and, most remarkable of all, Dennis Price (from KIND HEARTS AND CORONETS, remember?). Willard Parker, a veteran American actor from low-budget Westerns and war films, plays the male lead. The acting is uniformly good, except for a rather wooden performance by some unknown as a young husband. (Honest! He is an unknown: I've looked in every reference book imaginable and can not discover his name anywhere...) Dennis Price's snobbishly icy villain is easily the best of the bunch.

The film is photographed simply but carefully by Arthur Lavis. It is very well edited by Robert Winter (though I'm sure Fisher had a hand in the cutting, as that is where he is most experienced; he began as an editor in 1936 on Robert Stevenson's TUDOR ROSE.). There are only two main sets, but they are made interesting and pleasing to the eye by art director George Provis. Finally and most importantly, kudos must go to Elizabeth Lutyen's wonderful score: It is haunting and eerie, but restrained, never oppressive.

The plot does not make much sense. Most of the people on Earth have been wiped out by some kind of gas attack from outer space. A few of those left band together in order to stay alive. It seems that there are these slow-moving robots wandering about for some nefarious purpose--and their touch can kill. Later, the robots somehow cause several of the dead to come back to life and go after the living. Eventually the humans figure out that the robots operate on a certain frequency. They knock out the radio towers controlling the and stop them in the nick of time. The best thing about the screenply is that it does not need much dialogue: long stretches of the film work only with the visual imagery and the score.

The way in which Fisher handles the film makes it seem far less ridiculous than it easily could have been. His camerawork is smooth and effective. It is never flashy or jarring--quite the opposite, it is restrained and subtle. He concentrates more on the character, their feelings and relationships, than on the shock effects of the alien robots and the walking dead (we see only two robots and four of the resurrected corpses throughout the whole film). The scenes of terror are tensely mounted, but they succeed usually more through their gray, muted tones of paranoi than by Grand Guignolish horrifics. (Romero's NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD, which seems strongly influenced by this film, is the flip side of the same situation.) Th atmosphere is an intimate, personal one of quiet determination and human perseverance (personified in Parker's character); the basic emotions of warmth and kindness survive in the face of all odds.

The entire film is quite unpretentious: it recognizes its limitations and works i and around them with the same quiet determination shown in the characters. A fri of mine called it "a chamber horror fil" and I think that sums it up nicely. Th technical crew and cast all combine to work in concert, producing a flowing, seamless, poetic film of perhaps small stature but of definite and lasting beau in it own innocent, simple way. It wor extremely well...except (there's always an except) for one scene.

Towards the end of the film there i obligatory birth scene--a young girl ha baby. Fisher's idea for handling th scene is a good one, but if fails in th execution. During the sequence, the camera stays in the next room with the young husband; he is in long shot. Fi when the baby is born and its cries ar heard, the camera dollies swiftly acro room to a close-up of a look of ecstati fatherly pride on the face of the hus Unfortunately, the actor in that role not quite know how to produce the prop emotion. Judging from his expression, may well be simply another of the walki dead. A proud father he is not. Oh w seven the best must be brought low so Otherwise, the film moves along marv ly and effectively.

In contrast to THE EARTH DIES SCREAM one might (but I hope will not) want t look at a film made by Fisher eleven earlier in a Lippert-Hammer co-product SPACEWAYS. This is an amazingly dull on all counts. It is about an astron (Howard Duff) accused of murdering hi

CREATURE FEATURES by Dennis Coleman
(continued)

and her lover and puttingthem aboard a rocket that is orbiting the Earth. Big deal. Visually, the film is claustophobic, tedious, lifeless. It takes place in about five different rooms. The camera pans with each person as he enters the room and then sits there while the characters talk and talk and talk...An hour and a quarter of unrelenting boredom. The sets look very fake, the score is virtually nonexistent, the photography blank and flat. The actors are utterly emotionless. There is no creativity, no imagination behind this film at all.

One cannot lay the blame for SPACEWAYS on the fact that it is an early Fisher film and thus must be primitive. At the same time, he was making TO THE PUBLIC DANGER, THE ASTONISHED HEART, and THE FOUR-SIDED TRIANGLE--all very beautiful pieces. One cannot really lay the blame anywhere. Hammer was also making some good films at this period. But no care, no attention went into the making of SPACEWAYS. A hack work, a plain dud, pure and simple. Some films work and some do not. This does not (in about as extreme a way as it is possible for a film not to work).

So there you have it: THE EARTH DIES SCREAMING versus SPACEWAYS--a study in contrasts. Both films show what the same director can do with a small budget, a silly script, and a producer like Robert L. Lippert (not exactly one of the great producers of our time). The differences are startling. One wants to cherish THE EARTH DIES SCREAMING, see it again and again. But SPACEWAYS...once is more than enough.

Freddie Francis' name is the one that comes up most often after Terence Fisher's when discussing Hammer Films and their directors. Like Fisher, he came to specialize in fantastic films late in his career. Starting as a clapper boy and camera loader on THE MARRAIGE OF CORBAL in 1936, Francis went on to become a camera operator on such films as BEAT THE DEVIL (1953) and MOULIN ROUGE (1953) and later advanced to the position of lighting cameraman on such films as ROOM AT THE TOP, THE INNOCENTS, and SONS AND LOVERS (for which he won an Oscar). He directed his first film in 1961 called TWO AND TWO MAKE SIX. Soon afterwards he became associated with Hammer.

Like Fisher, Francis worked on both the Hammer Frankenstein and Dracula series and it is for these films, THE EVIL OF FRANKENSTEIN and DRACULA HAS RISEN FROM THE GRAVE, along with his work for Amicus (DR. TERROR'S HOUSE OF HORRORS, THE SKULL, TORTURE GARDEN, TALES FROM THE CRYPT, etc.), for which he is most respected and most widely known. But in my opinion these are not his best films. (THE SKULL excepted--that is perhaps his finest film.) His two Gothic Hammer films are uneven; they have long stretches of utterly flat direction; they lack the full atmosphere of Fisher's Dracula and Frankenstein films; Francis does not seem involved in them. He himself has said (in LITTLE SHOPPE OF HORRORS #2) that he doesn't like doing them. He is obviously not comfortable with what he calls "the monster/horror film." And in his Amicus work he seems to get progressively lazier. In DR. TERROR'S HOUSE OF HORRORS he seems to get into only the last three stories (especially the Chris Lee one), and by the time of TALES FROM THE CRYPT (1971) he is content to just sit there and zoom in and out--he doesn't care any longer.

I feel Francis did his best work when he was just starting out, when he had just made the switch from director of photography to director. His early work for Hammer seems fresh and exciting: he is really involved in the proceeding and puts his all into them. At this time, he made a trilogy of PSYCHO-type thrillers for Hammer written by Jimmy Sangster: PARANOIAC, NIGHTMARE, and HYSTERIA. These films have been largely ignored by all--even the staunchest Hammer fans. They are all in black-and-white and in Cinemascope. And Francis uses black-and-white scope to greater advantage than anyone I've ever seen.

DELAROSA/BURCHETT IF

CREATURE FEATURES by Dennis Coleman
(continued)

PARANOIAC is amazing. There is not a wasted shot in it. Francis places his camera in the most effective, suggestive, time-saving, advantageous positions possible and executes a number of very nervy camera moves that most directors of this type of film (Seth Holt, Silvio Narrizano) wouldn't think of doing. Oliver Reed gives one of the best and most memorable performances of his career. This film is frequently shown on television--I recommend that you catch it next time it's on.

NIGHTMARE is almost as good as PARANOIAC. Francis uses the widescreen in an interesting reversal, emphasizing the claustrophobic, stifling, enclosed atmosphere of the eerie country home in which the action takes place. The black-and-white photography makes the whole film stark, bleak, terrifying. (It does firghten--as I discovered when I showed it to an audience at Rutgers University: scream galore.) Though Sangster's script falls apart in the second half, the film succeeds almost as well as PARANOIAC, due to Francis' super-effective camerawork and lighting. But NIGHTMARE is rarely seen. Universal, who owns the only two prints of it in the U.S., said is has not been rented in over ten years. Supposedly HYSTERIA--in which Francis gets somewhat lazy but still makes quite a nice little thriller--is just as rarely seen.

Sangster's scripts for these films are a bit contrived, but Francis really gets into their mood of paranoia, and he and Sangster join forces to produce a vision of the world that both seem to work perfectly in. Unlike Fisher's world where dignity and compassion win out over degeneracy, amorality and selfishness, this world is one of total, hopeless gloom. (Fisher's strong scholar/scientist figure who works solely on the side of the good would not fit into a Francis film any more than one of Francis' weak, screaming maniacs would fit into a Fisher work.) NIGHTMARE in particular shows this vision. People constantly shut out the light; the good are weak and confused and are forced into a senseless stupor by drugs, by falsity, by fear; no one is to be trusted; everyone hides their twisted, perverse feelings beneath a veneer of hypocritical kindness. The primary motivating forces in this world are greed, lust and sadism. Francis fits right into this vision and seems to revel in it. He captures the full atmosphere of pessimism and darkness that Sangster presents in his scripts--unlike someone like Seth Holt, who makes of Sangster's scripts for SCREAM OF FEAR and THE NANNY rather predictable, rather cliched, rrather ineffective little messes. NIGHTMARE, PARANOIAC, and HSYTERIA seem to me to express something that is vital, that is purely Francis' (and purely Sangter's, I suppose). They work better than any of his later films. The sense of involvement, the sense of fully felt atmosphere, is stronger here than in any of his other work. Later he either got saddled with films he didn't like or he just got lazy. It's a pity these three films are so ignored. They shouldn't be. (NOTE: I must admit that I haven't seen the two films that Francis calls his favorites: MUMSY, NANNY, SONNY AND GIRLY and TALES THAT WITNESS MADNESS. Perhaps they are just as effective as his three early PSYCHO-thrillers. Then again, perhaps not.)

Here are just a few tidbits you might like to know (mostly title changes):

Don Sharp's 1972 PSYCHOMANIA (not to be confused with Del Tenney's/Richard Hilliard's wretched film of the same name made in 1963) is sometimes shown on TV under the title of THE DEATH WHELLERS; Al Adamson's BRAIN OF BLOOD shows up on the tube under the title of THE CREATURE'S REVENGE; Adamson's BLOOD OF GHASTLY HORROR (some title) is often shown as THE MAN WITH THE SYNTHETIC BRAIN; GRAVEYARD OF HORROR is really a 1971 Spanish film called NECROPHAGUS; LISA AND THE DEVIL, which has been shown on New York TV, seems to be Mario Bava's HOUSE OF EXORCISE minus most of the exorcism stuff--stuff which apparently Bava didn't shoot: so this film is probably purer Bava than the theatrically released one; MISSILE TO THE MOON is, believe it or not, a re-make of CATWOMEN OF THE MOON; MADMEN OF MANDORAS masquerades on TV under the title of THEY SAVED HITLER'S BRAIN; THE FEMALE TRAP is really entitled THE NAME OF THE GAME IS KILL! (1968); TERROR HOUSE, a horrid comedy about cannibalism, is the TV title of THE FOLKS AT THE RED WOLF INN. So there.

--Dennis Coleman

("Dennis is a fellow student of mine, fellow English major, too, truth to tell, who resides at RPO 3040 during the academi year, and also for the summer session until 7/27/78, and all the other times at 727 Bonsall Av., Sharon Hill, PA 19079, and president of The Rutgers SF Club--god, that's two plugs for the SF Club, WHAT AM I TRYING TO DO?" --Bill-Dale)

I AM SEARCHING FOR A REALITY I CAN TRUST.

SMOKING POT

signals an unwillingness, on some level, if just for a short period of time, to deal with the real experience of reality. It is reaching for a chemically altered one, rather than a naturally occuring one. It is a passive, not an active state.

It is also the symptom of something larger, I think.

Let us begin from the beginning.

I don't like chemicals who do things for us that we can do well enough already.

Like sleep, laugh, cry, and feel good.

For as the chemicals take hold, we start doing less and less something we are not very good at doing already.

Feeling. Thinking.

The last party I was invited to had as its "highlight" * getting stoned and incoherent.

I am not much for incoherency as a way of life. It is an interesting way of life. I suppose some people worship it because it is the only thing that seems to make any sense these days. I worshipped it out of cowardice. Cowardice to face the truth and responsibility of my own actions, and the quality of reality around me.

The host turned to me, and offered me a "hit". I refused.

He was insulted, and spoke angrily to me. He admonished me for my not joining in. Anti-social.

I said:

"Yes, I would like to smoke marijuana because I am worthless, without values, and would otherwise be quite boring."

I don't get invited to parties anymore.

But enough for pathos.

I spend a lot of time hunched over the typewriter, staring straight ahead, trying to form the world into something that makes sense again.

I am searching for a reality I can trust.

I don't smoke pot. If someone would ask me the immediate effect of that, I would tell them:

Loneliness.

But loneliness of a different kind.

Clarity.

Kurt Vonnegut, Jr. once told of a people who, looking upon the ugliness of the world chose instead to make their insides beautiful instead.

They used chemicals.

Since pot is no longer only a possession of the so-called "counterculture" youth, it has become a universal symbol of pacification.

Businessmen in leisure suits toke up at coffee breaks.

Pot is an opiate. Booze is an opiate. TV is an opiate. Shopping malls and duplicable fast food chains are opiates, watered down reflections, cardboard cut-outs of real fun, real emotion, real human thoughts, real human struggle. Comics is an opiate.

You may be wondering why I as an editor of a self-proclaimed fan magazine extolling popular entertainment would suddenty condemn what I later, in part, praise.

Be careful when you take in opiates.

Watch closely the character of the opiate which pacifies us. It is fashionable now to make escapism and "fantasy" films, like STAR WARS, adolescent sex fantasies like CHARLEY'S ANGELS and THREEs COMPANY.

Watch carefully for these trends. Whatever they are, they are first and foremost the collective signposts of our future. In many ways, they tell us our most intimate hopes and fears.

They reflect back to us.

That we should want nothing more to escape must say something about the coming dawn or the coming storm.

If anything, AFTA will be a place where we can discuss these things, see what they mean/ Discuss them against backgrounds and in terms no other forum would permit.

I want to make one point, as you read through much of the stuff in AFTA, which of course Sturgeon's Law will tell you, is 90% shit. I try to bring up the percentage a bit, but who knows?

And that point is:

DEMAND QUALITY.

When you are going to be pacified, watch carefully who is doing the honors.

Watch and read your culture, our culture with a critical and analytical eye. Love what you are doing, but understand that in a business things are created for reasons other than mystical inspiration.

Be careful of being pacified. Demand to be thrilled instead. Your life ultimately is just as thrilling as you choose for it to be.

You are the director. Each day is a new scene, a new series of takes. Squeeze out the best damn performances you can from all of your actors, especially yourself. There are no chances in this movie for retakes.

And if you are looking for a reality you can trust, don't, please don't look for it here.

In comics. In AFTA.

Demand, as you should, that AFTA be pushed constantly through changes, must constantly grow as you do. As I do.

Look for reality in the basic dignity of humanity. Look for it in hope.

Learn to dream again, and this time don't think it is silly, or don't let anyone tell you it is. Not this time.

Look for reality in your own emotions. Learn to amuse yourself in a room without tv, stereo, books, or posters.

Find pleasure in your own desire to be kind to people.

And your own desire to find that essence called quality in the things you do.

I can rave on for 200 pages, and make you a bit more knowledgeable and articulate about comics, and involve you in all sorts of circular fannish trivia.

But I can't teach you kindness.

I wish I could do a fanzine all about love and tell people what it is, and where to find it.

BUT I can't.

What can I ask?

For you to demand the same quality from me as we demand from comics, tv, and films.

I have a dream of making AFTA more than a fanzine.

Perhaps if you become involved, if you become my friend, I can introduce you to everyone else. On some level, we will become a family.

A family.

Perhaps then my dream will come true and this will be a fanzine of love.

A fanzine of love.

PASSAGE, Bill-Dale

I Told Them About the Louka

by
bill-dale
marcinko

I told them about the Louka. But they wouldn't listen.

The police came again, like with Junie Munson. They asked me again whether I knew anything about it. And I told them.

Mother said it was in imaginary playmate of mine. That all kids had them. That I was making it up.

But I wasn't. She didn't know. How could she?

In a way Mother was responsible for the Louka. Some mothers have a Boogie-Man or some equally frightening, but shapeless form to assist in compliance of their orders.

Mother would say: "You had better be good, or the Louka will get you."

I was always good. Occasionally mother worried about that, too. In first grade, they found I had high scores on something, so high that to this day, many years later, Mother still keeps it a secret from me.

I was the quiet child. Mother protected me carefully because of my shynees, and those scores, I think. Or I became shy in her protection, I don't know which.

She didn't know that alone in my room, my fears and frustrations over not being like the other children... crystallized... formed something almost... tangible.

Mother told me that Louka lived in the Simmons' Shirt Factory. They had stopped making shirts 20 years ago. The Simmons' Factory was on Maple Street, on that stretch of sidewalk and overhanging elms between Orange and Baker Avenues. It was always dark there. We children who grew up with a Louka avoided Simmons' Factory. We knew that there between the broken boards and cobwebs dwelled our childhood fears incarnate.

Teenagers, who had discarded these things like too small shirts, would often walk bravely past Simmons' at night. I have even heard that boys and girls in high school did vile things there in the grass. The Louka lived on vile things.

You see, I created the Louka, yet I have not with my own eyes seen it. It lives even now. My mother and father thought that my anger and frustration, the indomitable hatred of childhood, gave itself to visions of fluffy animals or baseball stars, when I was alone in my room. In those days before the Louka took Junie Munson, I thought only how to form my hatred into something concrete. How could Mother even think of baseball? Wasn't the day when Mother yelled at Coach DeLap for my scraped knee in front of the Team and I received taunts of Momma's Boy, Momma's Boy, Momma's Boy until I finally left Little League for good enough to humiliate the thoughts of home runs out of my imagination?

I was at Stig and Donny's house when the awful thing happened to Junie. We heard the police sirens and ran out onto Orange and turned the corner at Maple. We tried to see what happened, what everyone was crowding around on the sidewalk in front of Simmons' Factory. We heard snatches of whispers among the neighbors:

"It's Junie. Junie Munson. Look at her."

Junie Munson was a red-haired girl at school. She called me "sissy" once during recess.

"What could have happened?"

"I heard the doctor say that her head was ripped, not cut, ripped from her body."

The ambulance came.

We looked down at the sidewalk.

We saw a stream of blood snake out through the loafers and bedroom slippers of the neighbors. We stepped back.

I ran home to tell Momma. I remembered that Momma and Dad had gone to the Community Sing at the Methodist Church, but Ginny, yes, Ginny, would be home to tell. Ginny was my older sister. She was 17, ten years older than I was then. I loved her.

"Ginny! Ginny! Something awful happened!"

I ran up the stairs to her bedroom. I opened the door. There was Ginny in bed, NAKED, with Jim Oakfield on top of her, writhing and bouncing like a worm you sprinkled salt on. They were doing vile things. Momma told me about vile things. I ran out of the house.

Over the following months, the newspapers talked about suspects and investigations. But they found no human footprints, no human fingerprints, no trace that Junie ever met a human at the Simmons' Factory Building that night. But I could have told them that. The Louka was definitely not human. Horribly not human.

Everyone stayed away from the barn for a few months, but as August became September, and we returned to school, and leaves began to turn orange and yellow, people got braver and passed by the Simmons' Factory, first by day, and then by night. Junie Munson was forgotten quickly by most, and a calm settled over the elms on Maple Street.

One September night, about 8:00, Momma asked me to get a quart of milk from the Corner Market. She was making pudding. She had poured some milk into the bowl already, but it wasn't enough. She urged me, hurry, hurry, run like a bunny. She gave me three quarters.

The most direct route would take me past the stretch of Maple between Orange and Baker and right past the Simmons' Factory. It would take at most a few minutes. To avoid Simmons' Factory and take, say, Ivy Street, would double or triple the time.

I had never thought how the Louka would react to me. I hadn't been thinking that much about the Louka since Spring. My once real creature started to diffuse in my mind, the heavy breathing I used to hear on still nights trailed off as summer came. Summer and new friends. Real friends.

But what I had created outlived me.

I took the long way to the Corner Market. But as I paid Mr. Danielson and he talked to me like another customer, a friend, about my family and tomorrow's weather, instead of talking to me like a child, my confidence to confront Simmons' Factory and my Louka grew. I had the feeling I talked too long to Mr. Danielson. Momma would be waiting. I said goodbye to my new friend.

Maple Street. The factory was in view now. Some of the boarded windows still had slivers of glass in them, and they sparkled like icicles. But not cool icicles. Hot, moldy icicles.

The large elms which lined the street made shadows on the sidewalk, through the moonlight. (There were no streetlights on Maple Street then). If I looked too long on a single point on the sidewalk, the shadows would take on forms, and as a slight breeze blew through the elms and leaves danced to and fro, these forms would change with almost conscious

I TOLD THEM ABOUT THE LOUKA (continued)
by Bill-Dale Marcinko

movement.

I started walking. I noticed myself running.

Then I noticed something else:

The intuitive feeling that I was not alone.

The feeling that someone is at the door before they knock, the feeling that you know someone is standing behind you reading the comics, *too* -- that is what I felt.

I heard a half-sign, half-growl, a sound of someone's hibernation ending, *viciously*, and I knew.

I heard footsteps, not my own, although they were not so much steps as a sliding, grating sound.

In my mind, I saw the blood from Junie Munson come snaking out, curling and weaving itself, emerging from the cracks of the sidewalk.

I could feel a drop of blood seep into my left sneaker at the heel, and with that I bounded back into the streetlights of Baker Avenue and home.

I was out of breath. I ran up the stairs and into the kitchen and dropped the quart of milk into Momma's hands.

"Where were you, honey? You've been gone over twenty minutes."

I *had* stayed too long talking to Mr. Danielson.

"I even had to send Ginny out to look for you. Did you see her?"

I hadn't.

Could she...

"Which way did she go?" I asked, my vocal cords wanting to leap out with my words. My stomach started to tie knots in itself.

"Why, on Maple Street, past Simmons' Factory, of course. Which way did you take?"

"I came back on Ivy Street. It's safer. 'Cause of the lights." That was a lie.

They never found Ginny. Sure, the police came and asked questions. When it came my turn, I told them about the Louka.

But they wouldn't listen.

--Bill-Dale Marcinko
March, 1978

SPICE TEA
by bill-dale
marcinko

She invited all her students there.
A final farewell meeting of her class;
A privy entry into our teacher's sphere--
Visiting her home in Bertram's Pass.

It was January, cold and thin;
We'd leave early, that we vowed:
She said, "Please, please come in
The fireplace will warm us now."

I might as well be honest
We never liked her much
She was often brusque with us
We hardly ever touched.

She said,once, we must rise above
The petty pain in each our lives
She said, respect's the same as love
She said, no one must cry.

Half-circle 'round the fireplace
We were, in number, twenty-three--
She brought out all her scrapbooks
And served us tea.

Spice tea.

"Did I ever show you Gable?"
"Or Bette Davis, or Garbo, here?"
Her sagging eyes, through heavy rouge
Now sparkled clear.

And through yellowed pages
Her dreams came sneaking through
Like the tangy tea, so hot and bitter
With a brown and autumn hue.

"I wanted to be like them
And I could have been, if I'd had tried,
If Mother hadn't gotten sick:
I nursed her till she died."

"Daddy called me Little Ginger,
Ginger Rogers," (Then, she frowned);
"He used to toss me in the air
And set me gently down."

The second gulp had filled my breast
A moldy pair of ballet shoes
Locked in an attic chest
Oh,
No more dancing.

"But I have my scrapbooks,
And the hope my *students* will achieve
What *I* missed, and can't retrieve."

And the tea went down like a pressed
and flattened rose
Or aging stacks of newspapers, news
frozen in a pose.

She spoke of her husband
Gone these twenty years
The taste of the tea flared up
And burned like tears.

Spice tears.

--Bill-Dale Marcinko
February, 1978

("This proving, I suspect, that the iconoclastic Bill-Dale Marcinko (as Mike T. called me in his TCR review) is nothing more than a gushy sentimentalist. Hi ho." --Bill-Dale)

Now That It's Here, What Are We Gonna Do?

> The Future is Fun!
> The Future is Fair!
> You May Already Have Won!
> You May Already Be There!
>
> Hello, we're glad you made it!
> Welcome to...THE FUTURE!
>
> --I Think We're All Bozos On This Bus
> The Firesign Theatre

Well, kiddies, how does it feel to be living in the future? Bet you never thought you'd make it, huh? Well, here it is. We've been told about it for years. We've been pummled and pounded with people's prophecies and predictions and still things aren't quite as we thought they'd be. If you think about all the films you've seen that deal with the future, either as a setting or as a device (as in time travel stories), how many of them have given the slightest inkling of what life would be like today? Now, I'm not talking about gadgets and gimmicks, just about anyone with a brain in his head and an eye on his face can extrapolate about TV sets and teleportation, I mean the tone and quality of life in the future. There aren't many.

The range of future films goes from the sublime to the ludicrous. But when I think really hard, so my head hurts and little swirls of smoke come spiraling up out of my ears, I can find two films that gave me a feeling of some pretty important aspects of our life here in the future. The films were not wholly accurate in their presentation of the future. The films were not wholly accurate in their presentation of the future, but looking back on them now, I can see that they dealt with certain details that have become a part of our lives and will probably affect us for a long time to come. The two films I'm speaking of are Stanley Kubrick's A CLOCKWORK ORANGE and Woody Allen's SLEEPER. They are the two most valid cinematic views of the future to be presented in America, yet. I feel that I must qualify that statement with the words valid, America and yet, because they may not be the best future films ever, but they deal less with flash and technology and more with society (and there's no way around it, we're not all scientists on rockets to the stars, but we all must deal with the society in which we live); because I haven't seen that many foreign films dealing with the future and if I have, I'm not sure I understand their intent fully; and because you know and I know that there are going to be a lot more future films coming in the not-so-distant future.

Now that I've got you thinking, "Woody Allen and Stanley Kubrick?" It's time to plunge into an examination of the films so you'll know what I'm talking about. First, I'd like to point out that a film or a piece of fiction, for that matter, doesn't have to be a hundred or fifty or even twenty years old to have given some insight into our lives here in the future. Things are moving and changing so quickly, both technologically and socially that even something written one year ago and considered outrageous fantasy can be valid in terms of our lives now. So, we'll push on and see what A CLOCKWORK ORANGE and SLEEPER had to say about the future we're living in.

In A CLOCKWORK ORANGE, Stanley Kubrick gave us Alex and his droogs and a society where violence and youth gangs were a part of everyday life. When I first saw the film, I thought, "Nice, but it can't compare to 2001." That just goes to show you what I know. I saw it a couple more times and began to see more and more in it. Now, looking back on it, there's even more to be seen. The main thrust of the film was, of course, anti-mind control. It's basic message was that even the basest, cruelest, most violent member of society has a right to retain his own free will. Kubrick was not advocating violence as a way of life, but in order to make his point, he used an extreme situation. At least the situation. At least the situation seemed extreme at the time.

When A CLOCKWORK ORANGE was released, violence was already a mainstay in our lives. We had the war, riots and unrest throughout the world. They all played a part in conditioning us to death and pain as a part of our lives, but violence for the sake of violence, for the sheer fun of it, and brutality for pleasure were practically unheard of. Then came Alex and his friends.

It was difficult to believe that such a vicious person, a punk like Alex could possibly be a sympathetic character, but Kubrick needed a character whose actions and ideals would be all but repulsive to his audience. Then he had to turn around and make the audience care about him. If we didn't care about what happened to Alex, the whole point of the film would be lost. So we watched Alex and felt for him during his trials and tribulations, just as we were supposed to. But I also think that some of us enjoyed the raping and the fighting and the beating as well. Intentionally or not, Kubrick had given us pure violence as entertainment! (Of course, we've had that for years, but we've always dignified it with titles like sports.)

That was 1971, almost seven years ago, and at that time there wasn't a great rush of public imitation of the film, even though it was quite popular. ("Except for the well-publicized case of the boy in England, which is chronicled primarily in a NEWSWEEK article at that time." --Bill-Dale) People weren't quite ready for "ultra-violence", not yet. But now, not that many years later, we're building toward something awfully similar, not a society exactly like the one in A CLOCKWORK ORANGE, but one close enough to make you shudder.

It's not that gangs, gang violence and young punks haven't been around for a long time, but the manner in which they were portrayed in the film hit very close to a movement that is gaining popularity today. If you haven't guessed it by now, I'm talking about Punk Rock. Like other youth movements of the past two decades, the focus of the Punk Rockers is music, but that is

NOW THAT IT'S HERE, WHAT ARE WE GONNA DO?

by Jim Bertges (continued)

only a starting point. The music launches ideas and attitudes much like Alex. Their music generates the initial excitement and fury, but after the music is over, the fury remains.

Punk Rockers, having their start in England and moving swiftly across the ocean to the good ol' USA, claim to be the products of the working class. Their point of view is one of uselessness and their outlook for the future is bleak. As a matter of fact, instead of wanting to tear down the current social structure and replace it with another, better one, the disciples of Punk just want to tear down with no replacement at all. As it turns out, they don't like authority; they don't like political movements; they don't even like each other much. Reports of violence, riots and destruction at Punk concerts are becoming commonplace. In the end, it comes down to violence just for the sheer pleasure of it. Familiar, huh? It seems that Alex and his droogs were the First Punk Rockers (although, as far as I'm concerned, Alex had much better taste in music).
("Boy, don't you hate it when I interrupt articles like this? I said I was going to stop, but I'm typing this late at night, and it gets lonely. So... I just want to complement Jim on his brilliant observation, one that is new to me, but frighteningly valid, and point out something: The Punk Rockers claim that political repression resulting from a monarchy in England (I would think the situation in England is more like socialism with strict class boundaries, but let us not quibble over terms) is the root of their revolt. But they offer no solutions, they are NIHILISTS about love, about justice, about the future. I agree that total destruction is the end result the Punk Rockers desire (If I am interpreting the music correctly). Compare this, for instance, to the American youth's protest of an intolerable situation in the 60's (namely, Vietnam)-- the musicwas primarily folk and folk rock, and some solution was offered, even though that solution was vague and nebulous,like "peace" or "love" or "flower power". As you have noticed, Punk Rock, and its Americanization in the adolescent group, Kiss, is symbolically something we should talk about at length (how about next issue, Jim? Others?). I'm getting scared. A mention should be made of the popularity of sado-masochism in sexual relationships of late--fashions and ways of behavior are becoming fashionable (leather, studs, boots, high heels, straps, belts,etc.) and resemble someof the fashions in A CLOCKWORK ORANGE too strongly for my security and well-being. But enough, back to Jim, or I'll have to get a by-line for this if I ramble on any more..." --Bill-Dale)

In Alex's time, small gangs of young people roamed the streets at night, taking their pleasure as they wished, each gang with its own individual uniform. Often the members of the gangs wore varios types of makeup or masks, sometimes for fun as a part of the uniform, and other times for disguise. The Punk Rockers also have their uniforms; torn T-shirts, gaudy, bizarre jackets and just about anything gaudy, bizarre and shocking. Makeup, too,plays a part in the Punk regalia. Take a look at the American Punk group, Kiss. There is also one common symbol among the Punks, one that they recognize as the symbol of their movement. It's the safety pin. Pierced through ears, cheeks and noses, the safety pin is a common symbol for the Punks while the gangs in A CLOCKWORK ORANGE had no unifying article. Their only common ground was the love of violence!

Violence is the strongest connecting factor between the punks of Alex's time and today's Punk Rockers. They both seem to relish senseless, violent, destructive acts. Alex and his droogs were slightly more extreme, certainly, but with enough time to develop, today's Punks will easily match and surpass them. A working class background, a bizarre, uniform-life style of dress, and the use of make-up as a factor of identification are all common factors between Alex and today's Punks. There was a difference in Alex's appreciation of music and that of our contemporaries, but he was only an individual example. The scene in the record shop showed that the popular music of Alex's day was a parallel of today's sound. Group names like the Humpers, Cyclops, The Bad Brothers, and The Blow Goes were on the top ten of Alex's time while the Sex Pistols, The Good Rats, The Dogs, Devil and The Ramones are today's counterparts. The Nazi motif is common to both groups as well, but that is commonly used among many young rebels, probably to shock their parents more than anything else. A look at past movements and something presented at the end of A CLOCKWORK ORANGE may give us a hint as to the outcome of the new Punk movement.

In the end of the film, Alex, cured of his aversion to violence, accepts an easy, high paying government job, sort of as a repayment for his ill treatment at their hands. The key is that he "sells out" to the government. Not thathe has that much to sell out from, but in a manner of speaking, he went commercial. That is the same thing that happened with youth movements in the past, they became popular and commercialized, and finally, pase'. Of course, the "beat" generation of the '50's and the "Love" generation of the '60's left indelible marks on our society and I'm sure there are still some old Beatnicks and Hippies roaming the back woods somewhere, but their movements and revoluations have faded away. ("I'm planning to grow my hair longer this fall, ack, I'm going to be thought of as an antique. Once I had very long hair." --B.D.) The same thing is already happening with the Punks. New York fashion designers are marketing expensive, hand torn T-shirts and other costly items of Punk fashion. Soon you'll be seeing gold plated and even solid gold safety pins for sale at jewelry counters. ("Surprise, it has already occured. For reference, I will send all curious people an ad for a jewelry shop in the VILLAGE VOICE attesting to that fact." --Bill-Dale)
So the popularity of the Punk movement will grow and the originators, the musicians, will become richer and go off to other things. Then the followers will become disillustioned and either beat each other to death, grow up, or find something else to follow. At any rate, the Punks will end up like Alex, replacing their youthful enthusiasm for violence with a cushy position and lot s of money and their movement will fade into mediocrity.

Mediocrity, that was just the word I wanted to slip into the discussion of SLEEPER. Not that the film was mediocre, not at all, but the message it gave me had a lot to do with dull, boring and useless things. The

NOW THAT IT's HERE, WHAT ARE WE GONNA DO?
by Jim Bertges (continued)

society presented in SLEEPER is based upon mediocrity and banality. And although the film was fairly recent, its vision of the future set a tone that will be carried out in our society perhaps for the next thousand years. The underlying feel of SLEEPER is that nearly everything is boring and banal.

Basically, the problem with society in SLEEPER is that it's too large. Thus boredom becomes a mathematical equation of sorts; The Larger The Mass (society, or the population), The Lower The Common Denominator (those things which will appeal to the largest number of people). Take a look at what SLEEPER's society has to offer. Battery operated pets. Paintings of children with huge eyes ("It's greater than Eeane. It's Cugat!"). A major poetess who also composes greeting cards (her level of poetry lies somewhere beneath Rod McKuen). And surrogate, mechanical sex via the Orgasmatron. Anything that could be of value is mass produced. Everything is made so that it will appeal to the greatest mass of people and so it becomes practically valueless.

SLEEPER also deals with a type of mind control as did A CLOCKWORK ORANGE. But there is a difference, it is brainwashing through banality. In order for the totalitarian government to remove individuals, that is "free thinkers", and make them a better part of society, like the better cog in the gears of the governmental machine, they brainwash the victim with isolation and visions of being the winner of a beauty contest. It doesn't matter whether the victim is male or female, he is made to feel the "thrill" of winning a title like Miss America with all its moronic glory and splendor. Its a way of making the victim feel that there's something to strive for, even if he is just a cog and the goal he is reaching for is the fulfillment of the government's desires and has nothing to do with his own needs. Stupidity runs rampant in that society, much like it does in ours.

So, once you become a member of society, what do you get? What do you do? Well, in SLEEPER's time, you get your own one room apartment, complete with orgasmatron and orb (a device for getting high). You get your electronic pet (eventually, if you reach a certain level, you are allowed to have your own android servants, too). You get a useful job (working for the government, of course). And you get to go to McDonalds (yep, as long as there is stupidity, there will be McDonalds. Over 40,000,000,000,000 sold!)

If that's all life in the future has to offer, there must be someone who doesn't like it, right? Correct. But are they any better? There are rebels, opposed to the totalitarian regime, living in the wilderness and planning their attack. But they, too, have their drawbacks. They live like animals, literally! Their food is thrown on the ground, raw. They live in the open and sleep on the ground. That may not sound too bad, compared to city life, but when you get to know the rebels, you find they're just as dumb as anyone else. They even have a song:

Rebels are we!
Born to be free!
Just like the fish,
In the sea!

Terrific, huh? They want to overthrow the current government by capturing the leader's nose and destroying him, but they have no plans for a government that is any better than the current one. The whole thing is a stalemate.

Woody Allen sums up his nihilistic viewpoint in the final scene when Diane Keaton asks him, "You don't believe in science, God, or politics. What do you believe in?"

"Sex and death." He says, "Two things that come once in a lifetime." That is his viewpoint, everything is hopeless, unless you can get laid, and even that doesn't last. That is how the society in SLEEPER is set up, everything is useless and boring. We have not quite reached that extreme, yet. But we're getting there fast. Look at your TV set. Read a best seller. Listen to your government. They've all got the same elements; lots of action, sexy women, and very little to think about. Most material presented to the general public is vapid and void of any intellectual stimulation. The scary thing about it is, I think the public likes it that way.

There you have the two most accurate, valid, realistic views of the future we've had yet. Kubrick gave an advance look at our latest youth movement. And Woody Allen presented our society as it will look if we continue to thrive on mediocrity and banality. Luckily, our future (the one coming up, not the one we're living in now) doesn't have to be that nasty. And you-know-who are going to have to be the ones to make it better. So, you'd better get to work fast, the future starts tomorrow.

--Jim Bertges
1332 Currant Avenue, Simi Valley, CA 93065

A TEMPLE FOR RONALD

bill-dale marcinko

This seems like an excellent spot to bring up something I've read and observed, and much to the annoyance of my two roommates at college, plus anyone who happened to walk in the room when I was really "hot" with all of this, raved on to at great length. The only thing I can promise you is that my ideas will be greatly condensed here, to spare you any suffering. (Preaching, no matter what you're preaching, always gets terribly banal the longer it goes on.

I'm gonna try to make some observations on the philosophy behind shopping malls and fast-food chains like McDonald's, Ginos, etc.--which, if you haven't noticed, have sprung up (mostly in the suburbs, some in the country, not too many in the city) at an incredible rate since 1970, even. As I write this, Sears will be opening a store at the Rockaway Mall (a new mall about 2 miles from here which opened last fall), and for all I know, some enterprising real estate agent is buying up land for another to build nearby. Before I get into the doom and gloom part of this (I am the only person to really worry about shopping malls, most people just grimace and take them, some of you, perhaps are devotees of this New Religion), some fact taken from an excellent article on malls in the May 1, 1978 issue of NEW TIMES magazi called "The Malling of America" (neat title):

...According to a US News and World Report survey, Americans spend more time at shopping malls than anywhere outside their homes and jobs. You can buy anything from diamonds to yogurt in them, go to church or college, register to vote, give blood, bet, score, jog and meditate in them, and in some you can get a motel room, apartment, or condominium--and live there.

A TEMPLE FOR RONALD (continued)

by Bill-Dale Marcinko

...Something like $60 billion is tied up in American shopping centers, money invested primarily by large insurance companies such as Connecticut General and Prudential, and banks such as Citibank and COntinental Illinois. Investors love shopping centers for very direct reasons: They turn enormous profits and hardly ever fail. "Everybody has figured out that a major regional shopping center has got to be one of the best investments known to man," says Lawrence R. Glenn, real estate vice-president of Citibank.

...A Temple University study shows that malls are the most popular gathering places for teenagers in America. So for the noisy rites of pubescence, for old friends sharing a mall bench quietly, for the mainstream middle-class middle-aged middle Americans, Ralph Keyes says it directly in his book WE, THE LONELY PEOPLE: "Malls aren't part of the community. They are the community."

...The total power of the mall owner, even when civil liberties are involved, has been upheld by the courts. When war protesters entered an Oregon mall in 1972, the Burger Court decided that the mall doesn't lose its "private" character "merely because the public is generally invited to use it for designated purposes" and ruled against the protesters. Justices Thurgood Marshall and William Brennan said: "shopping center owners have assumed...the traditional role of the state in (their) control of historical First Amendment forums."

...Mall owners aren't shy about exercising their exclusionary power because they simply do not want anything to interfere with the shopper's freedom to "not be bothered" and to "have fun," as some mall officials put it. "Nothing gets in here unless we let it in," says the manager of Westmoreland Mall.

> UNTIL THEY REACHED THE LINE, THEY LOOKED DIFFIDENT, ALMOST FURTIVE, BUT THE MOMENT THEY HAD BECOME PART OF IT, THEY TURNED ARROGANT AND PUGNACIOUS. IT WAS A MISTAKE TO THINK THEM HARMLESS CURIOUSITY SEEKERS. THEY WERE SAVAGE AND BITTER, ESPECIALLY THE MIDDLE-AGED AND THE OLD, AND HAD BEEN MADE SO BY BOREDOM AND DISAPPOINTMENT. ALL THEIR LIVES THEY HAD SLAVED AT SOME KIND OF DULL HEAVY LABOR, BEHIND DESKS AND COUNTERS, IN THE FIELDS AND AT TEDIOUS MACHINES OF ALL SORTS, SAVING THEIR PENNIES AND DREAMING OF THE LEISURE THAT WOULD BE THEIRS WHEN THEY HAD ENOUGH. FINALLY THAT DAY CAME. THEY DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO WITH THEIR TIME. THEY HAVEN'T THE MENTAL EQUIPMENT FOR LEISURE, THE MONEY NOR THE PHYSICAL EQUIPMENT FOR PLEASURE. THEIR BOREDOM BECOMES MORE AND MORE TERRIBLE. THEY REALIZE THAT THEY'VE BEEN TRICKED, AND BURN WITH RESENTMENT. EVERY DAY OF THEIR LIVES THEY READ THE NEWSPAPERS AND WENT TO THE MOVIES. BOTH FED THEM ON LYNCHINGS, MURDER, SEX CRIMES, EXPLOSIONS, WRECKS, LOVE NESTS, FIRES, MIRACLES, REVOLUTIONS, WARS. THIS DAILY DIET MADE SOPHISTICATES OF THEM. THE SUN IS A JOKE. NOTHING CAN EVER BE VIOLENT ENOUGH TO MAKE TAUT THEIR SLACK MINDS AND BODIES. THEY HAVE BEEN CHEATED AND BETRAYED. THEY HAVE SLAVED AND SAVED FOR NOTHING.
>
> --Nathaniel West
>
> Day of the Locust (c) 1933

I'll repeat that:
Nothing gets in here unless we let it in.

So what do we have here? We have, by any sociologist's, economist's or businessman's study of the matter, a significant social phenomenon, perhaps the largest social change that has occured GEOGRAPHICALLY in the 20th Century. There used to be the family. There used to be the town. There used to be the community (whatever that meant). Now there is just... THE MALL. In most communities, the large mall nearby is not even referred to by name. "Where are you going?" "Where shall we meet?" "Where shall we eat?" The answer, looming in its simplicity--THE MALL.

I have been reading science fiction all my life. And I have to admit that I am spooked by the physical appearance of the mall, if nothing else. It looks like the set of THX 1138 or LOGAN'S RUN. It is no surprise that LOGAN'S RUN was filmed inside a mall. The projected future,as Jim Bertges points out eloquently, has become the real future.

We have a series of chain stores renting space in an enclosed, totally enviromentally controlled hall.

Not something to get worried about, right? So what if the mall becomes the hang-out for young and old alike.

Here are my objections:

The malls are controlled to the point of producing entertainment and advertising completely under the control of the manager, who (in many cases) may be a conglomerate like Citibank, who owns 200 or 300 malls. If the common denominator theory of programming in television is bad, look at the malls. The activities they allow are banal, superficial, inane, and above all, inoffensive. They must please everyone. The result--creating something so insipid, watered down and sugar-coated that the net effect is a kind of emotionless, artless, plastic imitation of real life.

I visited a mall once which had a gigantic 30-foot "tree" planted under a skylight window. Upon closer inspection, I found the tree to be artificial, plastic, and the "skylight" backed by a combination of tungsten and florescent lights designed to emulate sunlight. On a second visit (I was fascinated by the horrible inhuman monstrosity of someone who would create a plastic "tree" almost as tall as Dino DeLaurentiis' KONG) I saw a janitor washing the tree. I ask you: wouldn't the cost of a real tree and real sun (including maintenance costs, which I hear are minimal, God was a good repairman and janitor, all told) be less? And more desirable.

You know what frightens me most. That people don't mind. They accept the imitation. The Mall wins out.

I am going to quote a story related by Bill Kowinski, the author of the piece in NEW TIMES. It is verbatim.

"Walter Johnson High School in Bethesda, Maryland, was once in the middle of what was, literally, a cow pasture. There were cow pastures all around it; the team mascot was "Mighty Moo." But when Marcia was in ninth grade, that suddenly changed. And so did everything else.

Because up the hill from the school the Montgomery Mall appeared. A big two-level shopping mall, with four major department stores and the full lineup of other shops--the usual suburban bread-and-butter mall built in its time, about 10 years ago.

A TEMPLE FOR RONALD (continued)

by Bill-Dale Marcinko,

a horror story

Nothing outrageous or spectacular... but suddenly the students at Walter Johnson could not remember what they did on Saturday afternoon besides call each other up around 1:00 p.m. to ask, "Going to the mall?"

Montgomery Mall soon became an intimate and almost institutional part of Walter Johnson High and the focus of Marcia's suburban American Graffiti years. Her senior prom and Christmas dance (the Snow Ball) were held in the mall. She spent many of her "open campus" free periods there, having a chef's salad in the afternoon with a friend or just walking around. The mall capitalized on the school as well. When its fountain filled up with the pennies people tossed in for luck, the mall drew crowds to watch Walter Johnson's head cheerleader and drum majorette wade into the water in bikinis and sweep up the coins.

The mall was such a part of Marcia's world that a poem in the 1970 yearbook elegized it along with the rest of the evening landscape:

> It's getting late.
> The sun collapsed behind Montgomery
> Mall hours ago.
> These halls are empty tunnels interrupted by piles of dust left by
> previous life.

After I read that, I decided that there needed to be a drastic change in my lifestyle. You see, I had been a "mall-ie", and didn't think much of it.

That is where I made my fatal mistake:

I didn't think much of it.

I didn't think.

I didn't.

Now I buy my records at a small record shop about 20 miles from where I live. It is a mute point possibly, but I somehow feel better, being able to talk to the owner and call him on the phone, and know that it will be him (or possibly his wife) and not just an employee of a SAM GOODY's. I could get records cheaper at the mall at SAM GOODY's, sure. But something about the fact that there are a hundred SAM GOODY's JUST LIKE IT spread out in malls all over the U.S., flanked by stores like Penney's and Sears and Bamberger's, all duplicated right down to the dust on the racks, in Topeka, KS or Glendale, CA or Miami, FL.

Predictability.

Duplicability.

And plastic. Those are the things I am bothered by.

I know you will say, yes, the malls are made of steel and wood and glass. Not just plastic.

But the plastic I talk about is the kind of plastic, the pale mannikin of real life, real emotion, that begins to form in a person's mind after 10 years, or 20 as a mall junkie. Is this the kind of legacy we want for our children?

Didn't Kevin McCarthy run from something very similar to this in INVASION OF THE BODY SNATCHERS?

I just heard a commercial on the radio the other day which bothered me. Whether this is a nationwide or local contest, I don't know, but McDonald's is sponsoring a contest in which the prize is that they will arrange a family reunion by flying out your relatives on United Airlines (See, I remembered the name of the airline, their investment in the contest has already been paid off) to meet you.

Ronald McDonald. He provides.

Just like malls, McDonald's, Ginos, and other fast-food chains, the same principle of economy and psychology feeds them.

These chains, owned not by anyone you could ever meet in person, are in the control of a few superpowers (which I don't really mind, if they were just CREATIVE superpowers) who, following good rules of business, produce something identical to the other, and each McDonald's, not just identical in its design, but in its true lack of originality imagination, and, in my definition, LIFE.

The Malls are the new temples.

Ronald McDonald is the new God.

Somewhere in all of this I should say something about how we are teaching our children (and ourselves, how many of you out there are mall junkies? THAT MANY. O,well) not to be imaginative, and that it is better to be pacified in a sterile, banal enviroment, than looking for the real truth of their life and what they have to contribute to it, but it may just as well be lost at this point, if you have not been impressed by what is happening.

The Mall Era is here.

Pray to Ronald.

Build him temples.

He now not only has our stomachs (for breakfast, lunch, and dinner), but now has wormed his way into the family, and is providing family reunions.

Bless him.

> IT HITS YOU, BARBARA SAID, WHEN YOU"RE STANDING THERE NAKED, LOOKING IN THE MIRROR OF THE DRESSING ROOM. YOUR CLOTHES ARE IN A PILE ON THE FLOOR OR DRAPED OVER A CHAIR. MAYBE IT'S JUST A LITTLE CUBICLE WITH A CURTAIN BEHIND YOU, AND YOU CAN STILL HEAR THE OTHER SHOPPERS AND THE MUZAK. YOU'RE ABOUT TO TRY SOMETHING ON WHICH YOU'LL HAVE TO JUDGE, MAKE DECISIONS ABOUT. THEN YOU'LL HAVE TO TAKE IT OFF AND PUT YOUR OWN STUFF BACK ON. THIS IS ABOUT THE FIRST THING THAT'S TAKEN ANY REAL EFFORT ON YOUR PART SINCE YOU CAME TO THE MALL. AND THEN YOU REALIZE--YOU'VE BEEN HERE ALL DAY. TIME HAS IN FACT BEEN PASSING WHILE YOU'VE BEEN GLIDING THROUGH STORE AFTER STORE IN A HUM OF SOFT LIGHTS AND SOFT MUSIC, THE SPLASH OF FOUNTAINS, THE PEOPLE, BUT ALMOST NO INTRUSIVE SOUND, NO ONE CALLING TO YOU, NOTHING TO DODGE OR PARTICULARLY TO LOOK FOR, JUST A VISUAL PARADE OF CLOTHES, FABRIC TAGS AND WASHING INSTRUCTIONS. PRICE, DISPLAYS, COSMETICS, BOOKS, RECORDS. NICE COLORS. AN ICE CREAM CONE. ALL THE FACES, THE CUSTOMERS, ARE WALKING MODELS OF THE MALL'S PRODUCTS, OR JUST WALKING MODELS OF THE WEIRD. WHATEVER YOU ACTUALLY CAME HERE FOR IS IN THE DISTANT PAST. YOU'VE BEEN FLOATING...FOR HOURS.
>
> FLOATING.

I think it is about time we all patronized the small businessman, the book stor owner, the record store owner, the small jeans shop in which you are still able to call the owner by his name.

Before it is really too late.

SCREEN HORIZONS

Here in Miami, we have a very nice, small theater that reruns some of the better films, both American and foreign. They offer a different film everyday, and recently they showed Robert Altman's wonderful THREE WOMEN. I sat through it twice, seeing it for the third and fourth times, and I think I've figured out some things that didn't seem quite clear the first two times I saw it.

The strange murals depicting humanoid beasties of various kinds that Willie Hart (Janice Rule) paints everywhere have to do with her husband, Edgar Hart (Robert Fortier). He's a drunken, worthless bastard and fools around with other women while she carries his baby. The murals portray a pregnant beastie among dominating, hateful male beasties. The male beasties seem to be entangled with other female beasties, while the pregnant beasty remains suffering on the sidelines.

Pinky Rose (Sissy Spacek) didn't recognize her parents when they came to see her at the hospital because earlier in the film, Millie Lammoreaux (Shelley Duvall) said she didn't know how her parents were. This is just another manifestation of Pinky's parasitic adoption of Millie's life and personality.

Those of you who might think that Edgar Hart killed himself, he didn't. Either Millie or Willie killed him. I'd say it was Willie Hart, because there's one scene where she is shooting holes in her canvas paintings out on the shooting range, and she turns the gun on a target shaped like the upper-half of a man's body. She makes a bullseye right through the man's head and the expression on her face seems to emote raw hatred. All this seemed obvious to me the first time I saw the film, but I took a friend to see it and he thought Edgar had accidentally shot himself.

The ending, which really had me puzzled the first couple of times, suddenly became very clear with the third viewing, at least in my mind. It seems to me that Millie becomes the mother figure because all through the film she longs for someone to need her, to want her company. Willie Hart, on the other hand, wanted someone to care for her, to be the boss and to be superior over her, thus becoming Millie's daughter. Pinky, who is called Mildred at the end, is a little less clear, but she's pretty much like Willie in her change. She has no direction, no concrete personality of her own, so she creates one that will fit in with those of the other two women.

This is pretty much the way I see it after four viewings. I'm sure that there are others who see it differently like Robert Altman for example. But that's the great thing about this movie; it's possible for it to have more than one meaning.

Paul Schrader, a screenwriter known for his violent yet intelligent screenplays, is one of Hollywood's hottest prospects at the moment. With films like OBSESSION, TAXI DRIVER and ROLLING THUNDER under his belt, he's moved ahead and is now directing his own films as well as writing them.

His first screenplay was THE YAKUZA, for which he was paid $300,000. The film starred Robert Mitchum. Schrader was only 25 years old at the time.

Now at 31, Schrader's mind is a well of ideas that doesn't run dry and he has so many things he could be doing that he doesn't have time for them all. In a recent interview, Schrader said, "I have three complete screenplays in my head. I don't know them shot by shot. But I don't have the time to write them down. Columbia offered me $150,000 for three weeks work on a first draft of one of them, after I described it over lunch. Not bad, fifty grand a week. But I couldn't spare the three weeks."

Looking at Schrader's upcoming batch of films, it is easy to see why he hasn't got three weeks to spend on a screenplay.

His latest film is called BLUE COLLAR. Paul wrote and directed this one, and it stars Richard Pryor, Harvey Keitel and Yaphet Kotto. It is described as, "An angry, radical film about three workers on Detroit's assembly lines. They enjoy an easy raunchy camaraderie until they rob their union's safe and come up with explosive information."

The next film he intends to direct from an original screenplay stars George C. Scott and is titled HARD CORE. It's about a conservative, Mid-Western father whose daughter takes a bus to a youth convention in California, and disappears. Months later, he finds the girl starring in a porno movie.

After that, Schrader will do AMERICAN GIGOLO, about "A male hustler in Hollywood who works his way up to be a high-priced chauffer, translator and companion to wealthy women, and then is framed for a kinky murder."

Schrader has also written a film called OLD BOY FRIENDS, to be directed by the NASHVILLE-screenwriter, Joan Tewkesbury.

When asked why there is so much violence in his films, Schrader replied, "Well, TAXI DRIVER still pretty much defines how far violence can go in a movie. It's the one they compare other movies with. To me, the violence there was was totally correct. Here's a guy, living in a room, lonely, obsessed, ready to explode. When he goes off, you've got to show it.

"In ROLLING THUNDER, the violence wasn't convincing, because the main character was softened up too much. The character had to be made psychologically stronger for the violence to be credible."

Schrader blamed this on the direction, which he didn't have a hand in.

MARTIN'S SHORT SUBJECT

I attended a Steve Martin "concert" recently, and I think that it goes without saying that this man is one of our finest comedians working today. Woody Allen and Robert Klein fall into that same category, but there is no one quite like Steve. He's a true original.

As a prelude to his regular act, that runs some hour and twenty minutes, he showed his Paramount short-subject, THE ABSENT-MINDED WAITER. I'm not going to spoil it for anyone by telling what it's about, but if you have an opportunity to see it, don't pass it up. It's very short, only about 10-15 minutes in length, and along with Steve it stars Buck Henry and the ever-cute Teri Garr. The script is by Steve, and the direction is by Carl Gottlieb with music by Marvin Hamlisch. This short is a mere tidbit that came out of a much larger deal that Steve has signed with Paramount. The first (of, I believe, three) films by and starring Martin will be EASY MONEY.

SCREEN HORIZONS by Mark Burbey
(continued)

GREAT PROMISE

Kathleen Quinlan, that marvelous (not to mention attractive) actress who starred in I NEVER PROMISED YOU A ROSE GARDEN, has just completed a film called THE PROMISE. Unfortunately, Kathleen missed out on an Oscar nomination (which a lot of people thought she would get), but look at who she would have been up against; Jane Fonda, Shirley MacLaine, Marsha Mason, all of whom are established stars in top box-office hits. But rest assured, Kathleen Quinlan will be popping up on the Academy Award roster any year now.

BRAUTIGAN MEETS ASHBY

In a recent issue of Rona Barrett's GOSSIP, I noticed the following news item:

"Jack Nicholson's next film might be something called THE HAWKLINE MONSTER which director Hal Ashby describes as a 'Gothic Western'."

THE HAWKLINE MONSTER just happens to be a novel by Richard Brautigan, and Ashby didn't describe it as a gothic western; that's the book's sub-title!

Anyway, it should be a fine film. Brautigan is one of my favorite authors and it's about time someone made a movie from one of his novels. Hal Ashby, who directed such fine films as HAROLD & MAUDE and COMING HOME is an excellent choice as director. Robert Altman, however, could do an equally fine job, with even another off-beat western under his belt, McCABE & MRS. MILLER.

Another book of Brautigan's that I think might make a good movie is WILLARD & HIS BOWLING TROPHIES. If you've read the book I think you'll agree. It's a wild story about a collection of bowling trophies that is stolen from the less-than-bright Logan Brothers and innocently wind up in the apartment of someone else. The Logan Brothers set out in search of the trophies while a number of other characters involved go about living their unusual lives. This one is sub-titled 'A Perverse Mystery,' and the ending is one of the neatest twists I've read in a long time.

"A little note here, George Stover, editor of BLACK ORACLE, plays Bosley Gravel in DESPERATE LIVING. He gets bashed and bloodied with a bottle,among other things, I hear. Perhaps if I ever see the film, I'll do up an interview with George for AFTA?" --Bill-Dale

THE INCREDIBLE MELTING MAN

Probably the worst movie I've seen in a long time is THE INCREDIBLE MELTING MAN. I don't usually go to films like this, but I knew that Rick Baker had done the special make-up effects. Rick, as you know, was responsible for many of the aliens in the Cantina scene in STAR WARS. His work on MELTING MAN doesn't have the luxury of working with a story that has no bounds as far as imagination is concerned, but he had a few interesting gimmicks to play around with. Rick, of course, had to do the Melting Man himself, who looked like a man who had fallen into a vat of hot candle wax. But my favorite make-up effect was the severed human head that fell over the waterfall and cracked open like an egg on the rocks below, spewing its contents out in a most gory fashion. It really came off well. The scripting, directing, acting and scoring were all pretty bad, however. It doesn't really deserve going into. Just take my word for it. This one's a stinker.

COMA

One film that I truly enjoyed, merely for its suspense and sheer excitement, was COMA. With the exception of Brian de Palma (who is Hitchcock's premature reincarnation), Michael Crichton, who adapted the script fro Robin Cook's book and also directed the film, came about as close to a Hitchcockian atmosphere as is possible. The very subject matter gives the film an ominous and morbid tone, but to go beyond that and make everything supremely suspenseful is more than one could hope for. Genevieve Bujold is the actual star of the movie, and many critics are calling it her "breakthrough" movie, her first really big hit film. She's an excellent actress, and entirely believable from start to finish. Michael Douglas, who co-stars with Bujold, still makes me think of The Streets of San Francisco, but he's a fine actor. COMA could very well be his finest film to date. If you're a fan of film music the way I am, then you should love Jerry Goldsmith's soundtrack for COMA. Like Bernard Herrmann did in scoring PSYCHO, Goldsmith uses an orchestra that is largely and mostly strings, adding a few pianos and percussion instruments for the jagged edges.

DESPERATE LIVING

Written, directed and filmed by John Waters.

Anyone who has seen any of the Divine films (MULTIPLE MANIACS, PINK FLAMINGOS, or FEMALE TROUBLE) will know that John Waters is. If not, there is literally no way to describe him to the uninitiated. I will, however, do my best.

John Waters' films (pick any one) are bizarre, sick and tasteless. They are also very funny. Vulgar and outrageous would probably be the most descriptive adjectives. He has made it his trademark to concoct insane plots and people them with transvestites, perverts, murderer bisexuals, you name it, he's got it.

DESPERATE LIVING is his latest film, and his only film (to my knowledge) that doesn't star Divine.

It opens in the well-to-do home of Peggy Gravel and her husband somewhere in Suburbia, U.S.A. The part of Peggy is played badly but marvelously by a Waters regular, Mink Stole. You see, John Waters goes out of his way to find actors who can't act worth a damn. ("George will not like that, Mark." --B.D.)

Peggy Gravel has just been released from a mental hospital and is still a nervous, raving wreck. A baseball smashes through her bedroom window, and she screams out at the children below, accusing them of trying to murder her with a shotgun. She tells one boy in particular to go home and never come back because she hates him, his mother, and his entire

SCREEN HORIZONS by Mark Burbey
(continued)

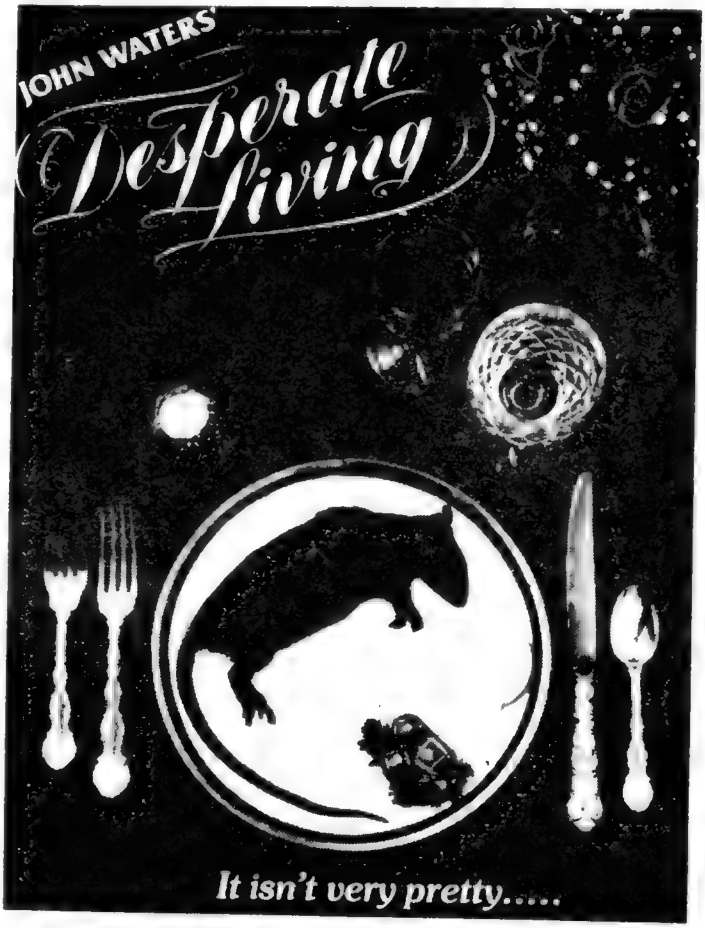
family. Then, the telephone rings. It's a wrong number and Peggy proceeds to tell the person on the phone that he called her number on purpose, to drive her insane, and that she hates him and all his relatives. She then stumbles downstairs, and in looking for her husband, finds her young son and daughter playing "hospital" in the utility room. She screams at the little girl, "Oh my God! What are you doing? Don't you know you can become pregnant?" Turning to the boy, "I never thought you would rape your own sister!"

And it goes on from there. The Gravels have a black maid who is extremely fat and obnoxious. Through a series of bizarre events, Peggy and the 400-pound maid end up killing Mr. Gravel and flee the scene.

They are guided to a town called Mortville, a place somewhere in the bowels of Baltimore where people go to escape the law.

Mortville is a disgusting place, vile and filthy, and inhabited by a motley collection of some of the most repulsive people alive. It is ruled by a blob of a bitch named Queen Carlota, played by another Waters' favorite, Edith Massey, who was the hilarious Egg-Lady in PINK FLAMINGOS. By the end of the film, the Queen has force-fed her prisoners live cockroaches, made them wear bizarre and tacky outfits, and submit to tortures like "Backwards Day" when a penalty of death is enforced for any forward movement. Queen Carlotta treats her subjects like this because she despises them. She is finally kiled when the townspeople learn of her plan to infect them all with rabies.

Waters' films are characterized by dreadful sets, bad acting, and obviously cheap production values. As a director, Waters is improving little by little with each film. The films themselves don't seem to be getting much better, however; they seem to remain at a constant level of quality, never falling below it or rising above it. What Waters has done, though, is create a genre that might be said to be an offspring of filmmakers like Fellini. The difference here is that Waters' films seem to have more plot than Fellini's do. Fellini's movies are more like anthologies than one complete story, judging from the ones I've seen.



A local film critic said this about DESPERATE LIVING: "What (this) film proves is that this is indeed a free nation. You can make a film like this if you want, and you can go see it if you want. People are doing both."

"It's a desperate life."

John Waters' films are fun films, to be taken primarily at face value. It cannot be said that Waters is ripping anyone off or cashing in on a fad that someone else has started. He is an original filmmaker and he has done more for the American "avant-garde" film than Andy Warhol ever has.

rabbit test

Joan Rivers' first venture into the world of films, turned out to be a dismal travesty. I had hopes that it would be good, and I pretty much expected it to be. But after watching as little as ten minutes of this picture, it became fairly obvious that when Ms. Rivers has to sustain her humor beyond clever one-liners and build a story, she is pitifully lacking in ability. She has no idea of how to tell a story with a film. The script, co-written with the producer of The Hollywood Squares, is so poor and formless that it's not difficult to understand why every major film studio turned it down flat. Every character in this picture is obnoxious and offensive. The humor is at a constant level of tastelessness and immaturity. I can only recall chuckling once or twice. Ms. Rivers supposedly has several other films already planned and plotted out. But if she doesn't get with a script-writer who knows what he's doing, she might as well save her time.

SCREEN HORIZONS by Mark Burbey
(continued)

an
unmarried
woman

Paul Mazursky's AN UNMARRIED WOMAN is a fine film. The previews for this picture make it look like a good-but-typical soap opera. I suppose, in a way, it is a soap opera, but at the same time it's an excellent movie. Jill Clayburgh, who I've come to like more and more over the past couple of years, really comes into her own with this film. She, of course, plays the unmarried woman who becomes such after her husband (played by Michael Murphy) leaves her for a younger girl. The character Jill plays is named Erica, and while she is the star of the story, she is surrounded by a myriad of interesting characters. Particularly interesting is a group of girlfriends that she hangs out with. The four of them share many a lunch together, trading both serious and humorous anecdotes about such things as men, marriage and the like. Erica is the only married woman in the bunch, as her three friends have already gone through marraiges and divorces. One of the girlfriends, who's at least forty years old, talks of an affair she's having with a 19-year-old boy. Probably the only thing that bothered me about AN UNMARRIED WOMAN is the numerous sex scenes. It's not the sex I minded, but rather, the tedium of seeing too many times within a period of two hours. It gets boring. This is partially what ruined LOOKING FOR MR. GOODBAR (beside the fact that it was a cold and ugly movie). Sex scene after sex scene does nothing but fill space. I'd rather see an emotional conversation or a heated argument, or whatever.

I WANNA
HOLD YOUR HAND

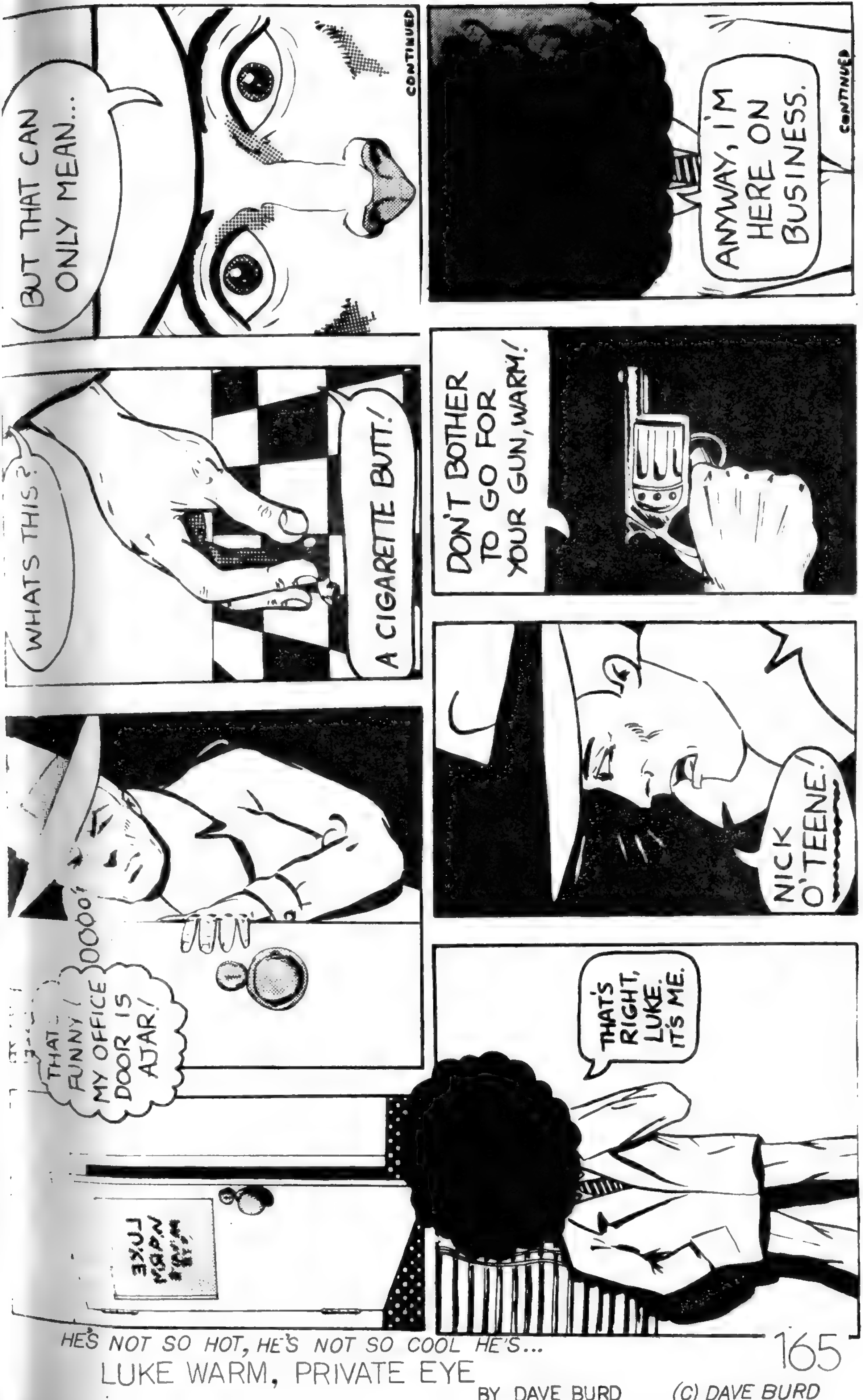
One of the surprise comedies of 1978 (thus far) is I WANT TO HOLD YOUR HAND. This film is non-stop fun and action. Superbly written and directed, it holds togethe extremely well, and is much like the kinds of comedies I've been longing to see. The story is about 6 teenager in the early 1960's trying to get in to see The Beatles on their first Ed Sullivan appearance. What they go through is hilarious. Much of the comedy is visual, Three Stooges type stuff. I've seen other imitations of Stooges shticks, and it has never been as smooth or as funny as it is in I WANT TO HOLD YOUR HAND. If you don't happen to like the Three Stoogies, don't let that deter you; it doesn't come off like they're merely swiping Stooges and they aren't obvious about it. The direction is so tight and smooth that it just flows along with the story. What's funniest about this movie is the insane batch of characters all of them played with incredible comic ability. The six teenagers are all young actors and actresses, and they all come off looking completely professional. Nancy Allen (the evil Chris Hargenson in CARRIE) is one of them. One character that will stick in my mind for a long time to come is a bizarre, Jerry Lewis-like clown who elects himself the greatest Beatles fan in the universe. He is the ultimate nerd personified and he's a laugh riot. If RABBIT TEST was half as good as I WANT TO HOLD YOUR HAND, it would have been great. But the stupid premise of the first pregnant man can't even hold a candle to the more realistic scenario of these six crazy kids wanting to see The Beatles. If you get a chance to see this movie, don't pass it up. Steven Spielberg produced it, by the way.

Jane Fonda
Jon Voight Bruce Dern
"Coming Home"

The first two of the Vietnam films, COMING HOME and THE BOYS IN COMPANY C (I agree with several other critic that HEROES wasn't really a Vietnam movie) were released fairly close to one another. COMING HOME, however, is very much the better of the two movies. A story by Nancy Dowd was the basis for the screenplay written by the well-known and talented Waldo Salt in collaboration with Robert C. Jones. The story fringes slightly on the melodramatic, mainly because of its strong romantic overtones. The director was Hal Ashby, who is quite obviously a versatile talent. The three main stars/characters are Bruce Dern, the soldier going off to war, Jane Fonda, the wife he leaves behind, and Jon Voight, the crippled veteran she meets while doing volunteer work at a local hospital. All three are excellent performers and are in top form in this picture. Bruce Dern is truly affecting when he finally learns of his wife's affair with Voight and blows his top. The scene in which Dern, Fonda and Voight meet the situation head-on was supposedly ad-libbed (the lines were written for them, but the actors were allowed to just pla the scene as they felt it). The only thing that bugged me about COMING HOME was the soundtrac As in the two other Ashby films, HAROLD & MAUDE and BOUND FOR GLORY, he used songs in the background as opposed to incidental and mood setting music. In HAROLD & MAUDE, Cat Stevens provided songs for the soundtrack, but by the very nature of the movie, this seemed to work out well. In BOUND FOR GLORY, the music of Woody Guthrie was used. In COMING HOME, rock music from the mid-60's, such as that by Jimi Hendrix, the Chambers Brothers, and the Jefferso Airplane played through much of the picture, and I truly feel it was a detraction. It seemed to me like someone was playing a radio in the theater.

THE BOYS IN COMPANY C

was another kind of film entirely. COMING HOME deals almost entirely with the story at home, whereas COMPANY C takes place almost entirely in Vietnam. For the most par I suppose COMPANY C could be called a "fair" picture; it's not good, not bad. The production values are relatively good, particularly in the combat scenes, but the kind of film used and the pedestri


THAT'S FUNNY! MY OFFICE DOOR IS AJAR!
OOOOO
WHATS THIS?
A CIGARETTE BUTT!
BUT THAT CAN ONLY MEAN...
CONTINUED
THAT'S RIGHT, LUKE. IT'S ME.
NICK O'TEENE!
DON'T BOTHER TO GO FOR YOUR GUN, WARM!
ANYWAY, I'M HERE ON BUSINESS.
CONTINUED

HE'S NOT SO HOT, HE'S NOT SO COOL HE'S...

LUKE WARM, PRIVATE EYE

BY DAVE BURD

(C) DAVE BURD

SCREEN HORIZONS by Mark Burbey
(continued)

direction gives the movie a look of cheapness. Most of the actors are unknowns, some with a degree of ability. Some of them have done a lot of TV work. One actor of note is Andrew Stevens, son of Stella, who appeared in THE FURY and in the tv mini-series, THE BASTARD. Having never fought in a war I can't really speak with authority, but from what I've heard and read about it, I don't think COMPANY C really showed many of the horrors of war; sure, it shows a guy falling on a grenade to save some nearby kids, a guy stepping on a mine and barely escaping with his life, et cetera, but it doesn't show war as the dreadful hell that it is. What it does show is that just being in the Marines is hell enough. Before the recruits and draftees even left the states, the Marine Sergeants and Captains treated them all like scum on the heels of their shoes. They were constantly screaming obscenities at the new Marines, referring to them as maggots and whatnot. But for the most part, THE BOYS IN COMPANY C will never take its place among the truly fine war movies, mainly because it wasn't written, directe or acted terribly well.

SYLVESTER STALLONE "F·I·S·T"

I suppose that everyone who liked Sylvester Stallone in ROCKY was looking forward to F*I*S*T with great anticipation. I know I was. Happily, I can report that for the most part, I wasn't disappointed. Granted, the film is flawed in some respects, but overall, F*I*S*T is a fine motion picture with lots of power and impact. Co-written by Stallone and Joe Eszterhas, Stallone has been quoted as saying that 95% of what's on-screen is from the mind and typewriter of Ezsterhas. Frankly, with a fine cast featuring Melinda Dillon as Johnny Kovac's (Stallone) wife, Rod Steiger as the hard-nosed senator out to put a stop to Kovac's allegedly crooked dealings, and Peter Boyle as the crooked union president, and Norman Jewison directing, the film couldn't go wrong. I must say, though, that the first half of the movie is better than the second half. The first half takes place in the late 1930's and early 1940's, showing Johnny Kovac's rise to the position of union leader and how the people around him fit into that scenario. Due to the time period, it is all very atmospheric, with all the old-fashioned clothes and cars and buildings. The entir first half of F*I*S*T has all the looks of a true epic. However, midway through, the time jumps from the mid-40's to the late 50's, and much of the atmosphere disappears. Interest is still maintained, but the "epicness" is lost. But there is much for us to relate to with the Jimmy Hoffa-like story-line and the Watergate-like court proceedings. Stallone is unquestionably the star from beginning to end. This guy has personality and charisma coming out of his ears. F*I*S*T, I think, surpasses ROCKY, and if his future films manage to even equal F*I*S*T, we can look forward to some great movies.

> "Mark Burbey has resigned as a regular writer for AFTA, and his review column, SCREEN HORIZONS will no longer be appearing in AFTA. In the two most recent issues of RBCC Mark has a two-part article on Brian DePalma, which is quite informative and interesting. Mark will continue writing for the RBCC at the present time, and plans no future contributions for AFTA. Mark has been a supporter of AFTA from awhile back, and his SCREEN HORIZONS, which also appeared in AFTA #1, will be missed." --Bill-Dale

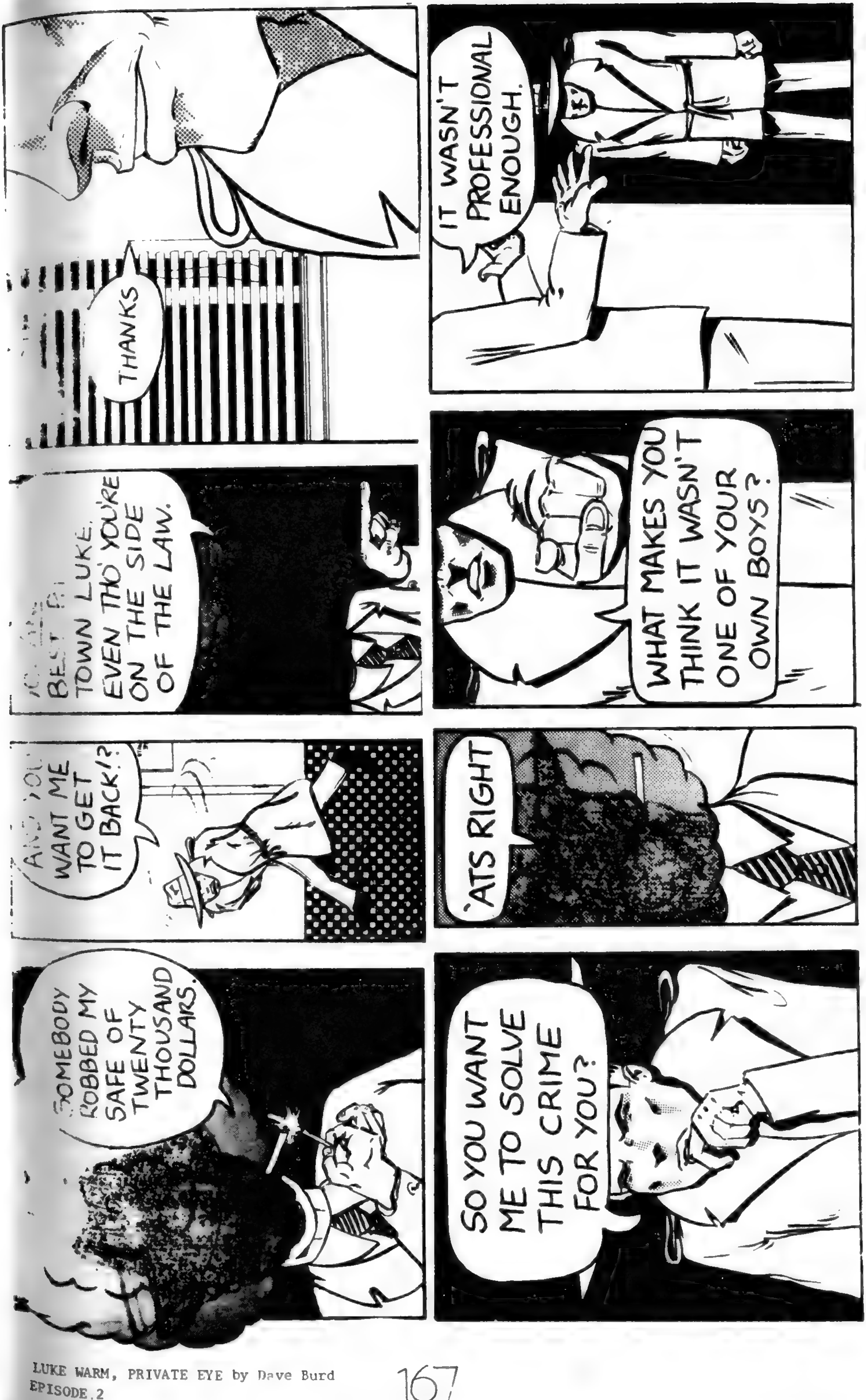
:SPROCKETS · ASSORTED FILM REVIEWS

CAPRICORN ONE

The theater darkens, and the sounds that are common to movie-houses everywhere--the munching of heavily salted popcorn, the noises of crushed ice swirling in paper cups, the whispered conversation among friends--die dow to be replaced by a vast stillness that almost permeates the structure. Almost, but not quite, for it is abruptly broken by a triumphant though somewhat ominous march. The thundering, moving, cascading music is that of the renowned Jerry Goldsmith, and the film is: CAPRICORN ONE.

Produced by Paul Lazarus III, who also brought us the action-filled, exciting FUTUREWORLD, and written and directed by Peter Hyams, CAPRICORN ONE is a new, fresh sf film which lights up the summer with a radiance that clearly transcends other dull, cheap fare.

Being mainly a sf film, it is also largely interlaced with heavy paranoia elements, which greatly add to the suspense and intrigue of the film. Its premise, roughly, is that NASA, because of a warning from Congress-- which states that the space agency's funds would be lowered if the next manned mission to Mars was a failure--decides to fake its landing when a malfunction in the crew's life-support system is found. This, however, requires the three astronauts, Charles Brubaker (James Brolin), John Walker (O.J. Simpson) and Peter Willis (Sam Waterson), who are scheduled for the flight, to fake their journey from two concealed soundstages. But Houston, unknowingly monitoring the spacecraft's progress, discovers that the craft has burned up upon re-entry. The life readouts of the astronauts back on Earth indicate that the three men are dead, since, of course, their craft is no more. The three, though, are still very much alive, and so present a bit of a problem to NASA and the other government


SOMEBODY ROBBED MY SAFE OF TWENTY THOUSAND DOLLARS.
AND YOU WANT ME TO GET IT BACK!?
YOU'RE BEST PI IN TOWN LUKE. EVEN THO' YOU'RE ON THE SIDE OF THE LAW.
THANKS
SO YOU WANT ME TO SOLVE THIS CRIME FOR YOU?
'ATS RIGHT
WHAT MAKES YOU THINK IT WASN'T ONE OF YOUR OWN BOYS?
IT WASN'T PROFESSIONAL ENOUGH.

LUKE WARM, PRIVATE EYE by Dave Burd
EPISODE.2

agencies-- a problem which is ultimately concluded by a wild air race above a nearby desert.

James Brolin gives a very good performance throughout, and Shakespearean actor Sam Waterson, along with O.J. Simpson, lend clear-cut credibility to their roles, as do Brenda Vacarro (Kay Brubaker) and Elliot Gould (Robert Caufield). But the real star of the show is definitely Hal Holbrook (Dr. James Kelloway). His performance is superb, and along with a script that presented an insight into Kelloway's character, he almost managed to convince us that the end justifies the means.

While professionalism is obviously a way of life for these gifted people, for some producers it has maintained a far-off, elusive quality to master, and with actors that are very wide and diverse in their methods and images, this is certainly a tedious task. Yet, Lazarus and Hyams seem to have accomplished it, even with a cast such as those previously mentioned.

This achievement was probably due to the fact that Lazarus and Hyams disregarded the images that the actors had previously portrayed--with the exception of Karen Black and Telly Savalas, who have cameo roles in the film--rather than ingrain these images into the characters. So what we come up with, then, is a delightful array of contrasting characters and personaliti that can only add to the quality of the film.

The quality of the film, however, is improved by other factors as well, such as the camerawork. Director of Photography Bill Butler should be commended on this, for he has lent his talents to presenting us with a heart-jumping dash through the midst of a busy city in a car with no brakes, not to mention a climatic, soaring chase between a crop-duster and two Army helicopters.

The camera angles used are also very unique and intriguing. Theone not to be missed, of course, is the close-up of the astronaut and the lander, with the zoom outward to reveal the entire soundstage, masterfully mimicking the famous moon photo while we hear: ...and we know how bad mankind can sometimes be..." But other angles are seen to be just as good. The low-angle shots for scenes which require a dark and threatening mood (as when reporter Caufield confronts the woman who says she has been living in her apartment for many months--the same apartment in which lived a Houston controller who apparently knew too much) are a nice touch, as are the tilting, revolving angles in the sky chase. Clearly Hyams and his assistants knew what they were doing.

However, one technical error must be pointed out in the area of the two Army helicopters sent out to kill the three astronauts, whose disabled plane has crashed in the middle of the desert. To converse back and forth, the two pilots turn their copters around to face each other, and then apparently communicate via hand signals. While this is certainly a clever illustration ofthe film's theme, since it gives an appearance of two winged predators deliberating over their next course of prey, it does not reason out logically, simply because the pilots would use their radios instead.

But overall, the sequence with the helicopters was filmed and choreographed exceptionally well, and was indeed a chilling addition, partly due to the fact that the faces of the pilots are never really shown, and also due largely to a scene in which Sam Waterson climbs all the way to the top of a gigantic precipice, only to find that the two copters lie in wait for him. There are other eerie scenes in the film, but this, perhaps, is the most notable of all. A somewhat gruesome one is also contained around this time, involving James Brolin--but it has to be seen to be believed.

CAPRICORN ONE is a truly splendid work, and no matter what Frank Rich of TIME says, it is full of action, rapidly flowing adventure, sardonic wit, a few twists and turns of the plo here and there, and perhaps most importantly, a very good message for us all.

--Scott Loy, 923 Mayfair Place, Rockford, IL 61107

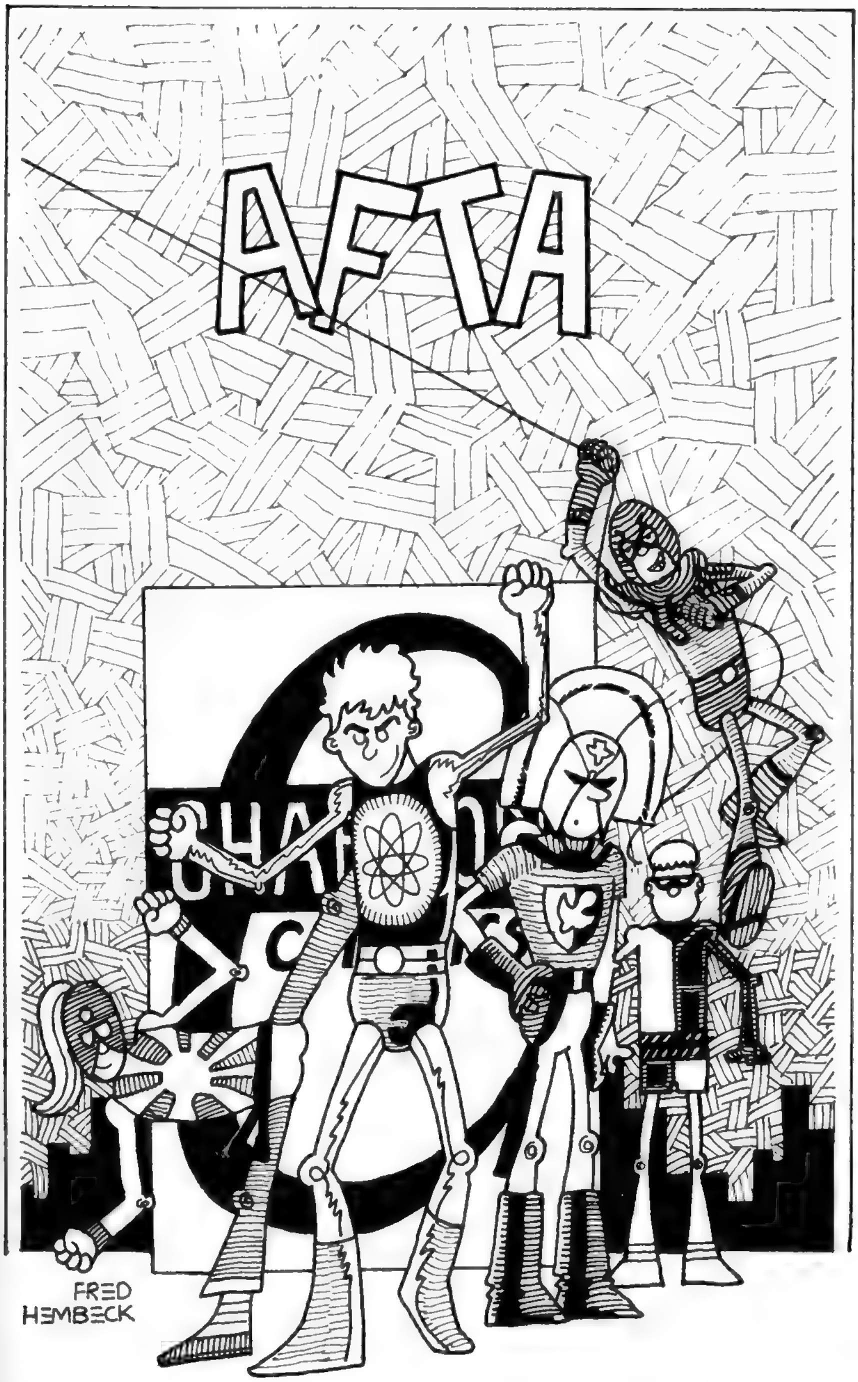
Michael Brandon has the title role as the manager of FM station, Q-SKY. He is involved in a war with radio station executives, over the amount of advertising-meaning dollars, the station is pulling in. Brandon wants less, the executives want more, especially a lucrative Army account.

If this sounds kind of familiar, it is because FM has been accused of being the radio version of the movie, Network. I disagree, however. Except for the advertising/rating simularity and the Martin Mull/Peter Finch breakdown while on the air, they are different movies. There is a cause for other Deja Vu.

A scene involving deejay Martin Mull and a voluptuous mama is taken straight from M*A*S*H as their amorous activities are broadcast over the station's p.a. system. The Q-SKY owner reminded me of old man Posner in BILLY JACK. The youths kept vigil on the radio station in the film's conclusion. This reminded me of BILLY JACK. I could be wrong, but I think I have seen the characters from FM before. Alex Karras/Mongo plays an over-the-hill cowboy announce Jive talking Cleavon Little's blindness he had as a deejay in VANISHING POINT has cleared up and is now Q-SKY's black prince of the nighttime. Eric Swann, Martin Mull's alter ego, acted like he is related to Barth Gimble. With the exception of Eileen Brennan's Stevie Nicks in twenty years character, everybody is a cliche.

FM boasts a great sound track, which helps and hinders the movie. The segment where Brandon is speeding along trying to get to work on time is nicely set-up by the Eagles hit, LIFE IN THE FAST LANE. The most effective piece is Queen's WE WILL ROCK YOU capturing the general mood of the crowd in the finale. Unfortunately, the music never stopped and distract me several times from the dialogue being spoken. Despite FM's faults, I got into this movie, the sound was great. If nothing else, the Linda Ronstadt portion of the film makes the price of admission worthwhile.

--Jose A. Blanco, 505 East Tenth, Topeka, KS 66607



NEXT: THE MERCHANDIZING OF BILL DALE MARCINKO——THE ARRIVAL OF RUPERT PEACH WHO HAS A PLAN TO SAVE AFTA...

PEACH: "The problem with AFTA, as I see it, and Bill-Dale Marcinko in particular, is that you are too much of a human being-- you laugh, you cry, you are afraid. What the American public wants is a hero built on a great mountain of hype... You've got to be sold, like toothpaste, like breakfast cereal, like the new Ford Pintos, and I'm the man to do it ~~to~~ for you. There's gonna have to be a lot of changes in AFTA with #3..."

THE NEW AFTA WILL BE OUT 11/15/78!

RENALDO & CLARA
A FILM BY BOB DYLAN

reviewed by billie mudry

"My film is truer than reality." This is how Bob Dylan described RENALDO AND CLARA to a *New York Times* reporter. Long-sought-after interviews were given to major publications such as *Rolling Stone*, *New Times* and *Playboy* in order to publicize the four-hour film. Dylan sounded like an artist/intellectual filmmaker as he discussed the themes of alienation and identity in the movie. Yet, despite this media blitz and attempt to impress the cinema clique, the press attacked RENALDO AND CLARA with a vengeance.

For a newcomer to the field, Dylan's work is much more promising than the critics claim. It is not great, but he does show ability although he needs to condense his material and present it in a clearer way. Most reviewers of the film raised issues which are irrelevant and did not deal with the film as a film. The purpose of this review is twofold; first, to deal with RENALDO & CLARA more objectively and, second, to suggest some reasons why the press was so hostile.

Critics and fans alike enjoy the concert footage. Dylan has always been a commanding presence onstage. Here, he allows the viewer to see him more intimately than usual. There are fresh reworkings of his songs with delightful camera work which is similar to the excellent *Hard Rain* special, another RTR spinoff. The camera zeroes in on Dylan's hand opening and closing to the staccato beat of *Isis*, the sweat dripping off his forehead in *It Ain't Me Babe*, and his eyes overflowing with emotion in *Sara*. Thus we are given a closer look at the incredible energy that he puts in all his performances. Others in the RTR entourage are well spotlighted. Scarlett Rivera, Roger McGuinn, Mick Ronson, Jack Elliot, Ronee Blakely and Bob Neuwirth all give memorable performances.

Offstage, Dylan reveals a side of him that is difficult for his audiences to believe or accept, since they like to see him as omnipotent. Instead; Dylan makes Renaldo into an awkward drifter who is confused and helplessly trying to reach out to people around him. He totally lacks the charisma he projects onstage. Even his woman, Clara, played by Sara Dylan, is a manipulative seductress that uses her body, eyes, and voice to extract what she wants from everyone. She appears to be a gentle, soft-spoken lady; but underneath she is a merciless prober and a vicious sniper. Still, Renaldo is entranced by her stunning beauty. Joan Baez, as the Woman In White, equals Clara in physical beauty; but is her direct opposite in character. The Woman is strong, honest and direct. She lets Renaldo choose his own fate, accepts defeat graciously and rises above her loneliness with laughter and warmth. Baez sheds her self-righteous image, emerging instead as a very likeable, vivid, human being. She is, in fact, the best character of them all.

Dylan's struggle to help Hurricane Carter is one of the best sequences. The Carter song is powerfully moving, yet we see that the public is apathetic. Clips of Carter expressing idealistic hopes that he will be freed are interspersed with cuts to people on a Harlem street who show in interviews that they are ignorant and unconcerned with his plight. Meanwhile, *Hurricane* plays on throughout the entire sequence, linking the cuts together, underlining the concept that even an artist as influential as Dylan can only reach so far.

Some of the strengths of RENALDO AND CLARA that have been largely ignored deserve consideration. Dylan has a strong visual sense that he is adept at translating to the screen. He blends images with sound strikingly. Scenes such as a car gliding in perfect rhythm to a background song, and Sara Dylan walking with catlike grace down a Montreal street to the beat of Allen Ginsberg reciting a dramatic poem about her eyes actually show the vivid visual landscaping that renders Dylan's songs so emotionally powerful.

As a director, Dylan is able to capture a great deal that is spontaneous. Humor is his especial domain. Thus, we are treated to the irony of Allen Ginsberg reading poetry to a nightclub-full of old ladies, Bob Neuwirth's absurdly getting lost on a train for four days and the sublime ridiculousness of preachers clobbering their opponents on Wall Street.

Ronee Blakely and Ronnie Hawkins are cast as the Dylans. Hawkins is perfect as the road hipset seducing a young farm girl and Blakely captures the passion of a woman's search for love. However, neither of them even remotely suggest the personalities of Mr. and Mrs. Dylan. Many people have speculated about the possible deep meanings of their identities. It appear to be a simple theatrical device to make the viewer discard his or her images of Dylan and relate to Renaldo and Clara seperately. It fails because Hawkins and Blakely are simply two more people in the entourage.

Some genuine technical problems exist in RENALDO AND CLARA. Many viewers, used to following filmed events in ordered sequences, are upset by its fragmented style. Dylan fans accept it better since most of his songs are written in that genre. Some jumpy cuts irritate the eyes, some scenes are blurred, voices are often indistinct and one part even has the actors' voices out of synchonization with the film. Many people feel (as Dylan thought they might) that four hours is just too long to watch a movie. The length is not a real problem so much as that some scenes are boring and unnecesssary. Particularly annoying are the luncheonette conversations, the rope sequence with Neuwirth and Mrs. Dylan and David Blue's stuffy-nosed monologues while he plays pinball endlessly.

Most reviewers did not really deal with the technical aspects of RENALDO & CLARA. They rambled on about Dylan not "revealing" the "definitive Dylan" as if such an entity actually existed or mattered. They complain that Dylan does not provide "answers" to the conflicts he presents. The whole point is that Renaldo *has* no definitive self and can *not* answer his own questions. All he can really do is continue to ask and search for the answers. Critics also expected to see a sophisticated product which is equal to Dylan's ability as a performer/writer. If they had treated him simply as a newcomer, they would have never been as harsh as they were on him. (There are also some publications that *as a matter of policy* knock everything that Dylan does (most notoriously *The Village Voice*). *These* do not even deserve the dignity of a rebuttal!)

If Dylan works on his technical difficulties and condenses his material by more cautious editing; his strong visual/aural sense, subtle humor and unique perspective are tools he can use to make very good films.

--Billie Mudry

83-75 118th St., #5B, Kew Gardens, NY 11415

A COLUMN BY ED VIA

GLEANINGS FROM THE SILVER SCREEN

HIGH ANXIETY

The Master of Suspense Meets the Mad Genius
(or)
"Mel, this is Hitch. Hitch, this is Mel."

It's no secret that Mel Brooks' "High Anxiety" is a loving satire of the films of Alfred Hitchcock. It is also no secret that this clever, witty, recklessly funny motion picture works best when it stays closest to the master's own techniques of ever-building suspense, odd, imaginative camera angles, and protagonists who have no idea what the hell's going on most of the time. It will put you on the floor the way the originals put you on the edge of your seat; it is a crazy paradise for those who love Hitchcock and a wacky world of wonderment for anyone who just wants to throw back his head and laugh.

As Richard Thorndyke, Mel Brooks parodies the confused Hitchcock hero who finds himself caught up in events he does not understand till the very end, like Cary Grant in "North by Northwest" or Robert Donat in "The 39 Steps". Dr. Thorndyke, a paranoid psychiatrist who is afraid of heights, is the new head of the California-based "Psycho-Neurotic Institute for the Very, Very Nervous". After a nerve-wracking flight from the east, Dr. Thorndyke is welcomed to L.A. International airport by a noisesome woman brandishing a mean-looking umbrella and a quiet man in a trenchcoat who has something to show him in the Men's Room. From there, he moves on to the Institute itself, where all is definitely not kosher.

Outstanding among the large supporting cast are Harvey Korman, the sinister chief psychiatrist who was next in line for the Director's job when the previous holder of that position died under mysterious circumstances, and who is very upset about not taking the Institute over, Ron Carey, the good-buy chauffeur who knows something's wrong but isn't smart enough to figure out what it is, and Cloris Leachman, whose role as the villainous Nurse Diesel has aptly been described as a cross between Dolly Parton and Darth Vader. She is the quintessential evil Hitchcock female, so mean she keeps baby sharks in her aquarium. Also in fine form are Madeline Kahn, who, as a frightened, sensual Hitchcockian heroine, cements her standing as the world's greatest comedy actress, and Dick Van Patten, who plays a weak-kneed doctor who is murdered by being locked in a car with loud rock music blaring at him until his eardrums burst. And, last but not least, there's Howard Morris as Thorndyke's mentor, Prof. Lilloman, pronounced "Little Old Man".

Brooks and his co-writers, Ron Clark, Barry Levinson, and Rudy DeLuca, have crafted a fine script which gives glorious life to everything we always wanted to see go crazy in a Hitchcock film, from the park bench sequence in "The Birds" to the unforgettable shower scene in the greatest of them all,"Psycho". As Producer/Director, Brooks has filmed a glowing homage to a man who is one of the greatest cinema craftsmen who has yet lived. It is a motion picture that will put a smile on your face and a song in your heart. "High Anxiety", you win!

A BRIDGE TOO FAR

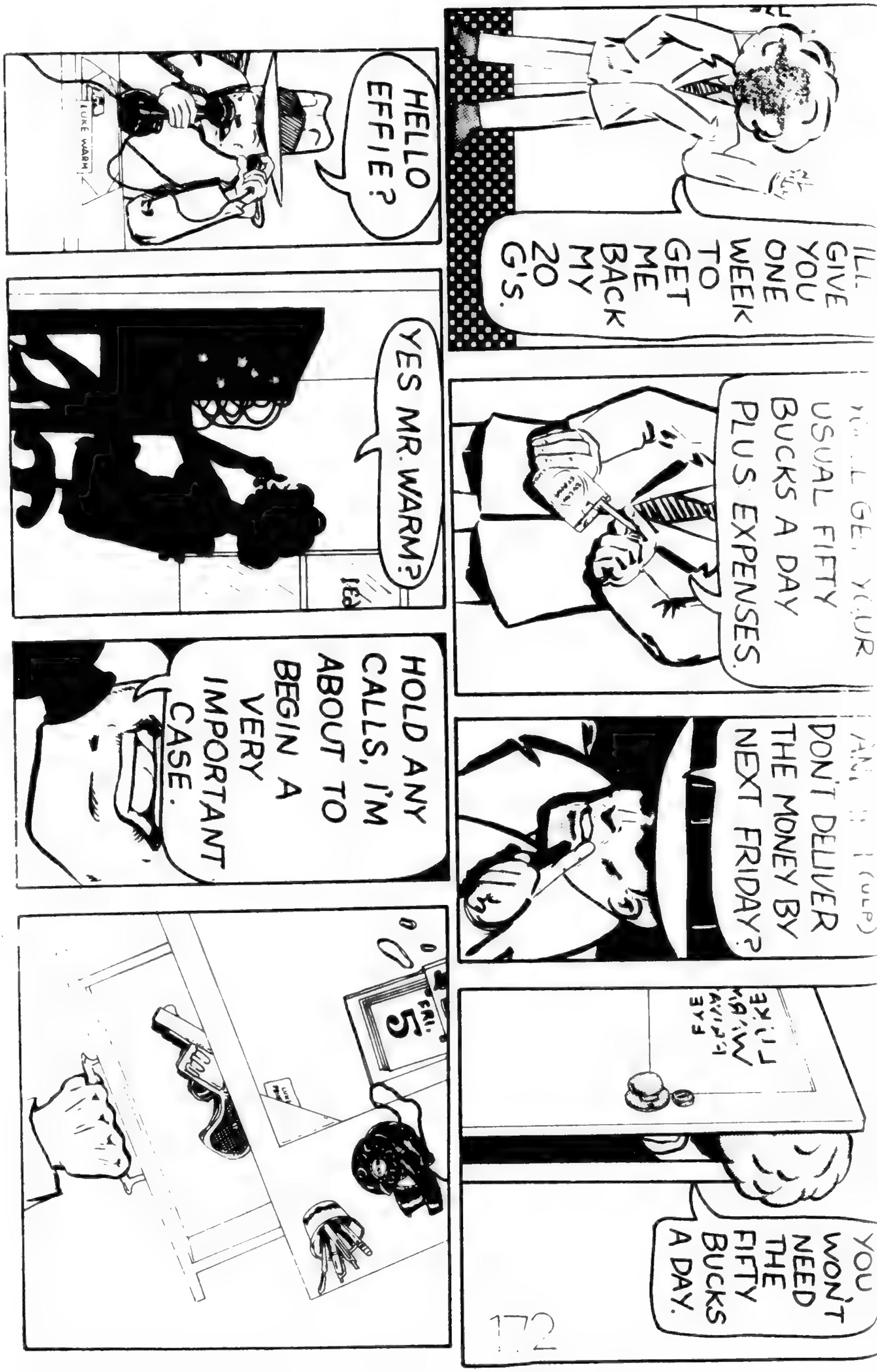
Operation Market-Garden, Field Marshall Bernard Law Montgomery's bold, imaginative, and horrifically ill-fated plan to establish a bridgehead across the Rhine and end the Second World War by Christmas of 1944, is dramatized in Richard Attenborough's A BRIDGE TOO FAR. The film, which was produced at a cost of 25 million dollars,much of which went for salaries, is one of the most riveting portraits of men and war ever made. Among the all-star cast, the standouts are Sean Connery, portraying General Roy Urquart, commander of the First British Airborne Division, who have the rotten assignment of capturing and holding the Arnhem Bridge across the lower Rhine, and Gene Hackman, who plays General Stanislaw Sosabowski, leader of the Polish First Parachute Brigade, whose men are doomed to be all but annihilated after being dropped in the middle of enemy ofrces because of a catastrophic breakdown in communication. Others worth watching are Lawrence Olivier and Liv Ullman, who are on the screen a very short time but who give fine, quietly controlled performances, and Michael Caine, whose portrayal of tank man Joe Vandeleur is smooth and cynical and well-acted.

Staggering in its logistics, spectacular in its representation of the airborne, or "Market", phase of the operation, A BRIDGE TOO FAR acrually works best at showing the indominable courage of the men who fight and die to open a corridor for General Brian Horrocks' 30th Corps tanks (comprising the "Garden" phase) to establish the Allied bridgehead. The realism, described by Arnhem veterans as being "almost too much to take", gets to one over the three hours the film consumes, but it is a grim reminder of what the men who fought there had to endure. Especially grueling is the portion of the picture that depicts the plight of those who held the Arnhem Bridge for four days despite unexpectedly murderous resistence from the GErmans, who had two SS Panzer divisions in the area, neither of which had been expected to be there. Anthony Hopkins, who plays Colonel John Frost, commander of the paratroopers who seize the bridge, is marvelous. He effectively portrays a quiet man who fights the good fight until there's no more left in him, typifiying the determination and bravery of the British parachutists.

The casualties resulting from Operation Market-Garden were mind-boggling, and there are many scenes that give accurate impressions of the awful extent of them. One of these recreates the daring amphibious assault by General James M. Gavin's American 82nd Airborne Division on the crucial Nijmegan Bridge, the last obstacle between the Allied forces and the men under fire at Arnhem. In one bold stroke, Gavin's men seized both ends of the bridge at once and kept the Germans from destroying it. In the most questionable piece of casting in the entire motion picture, Gen. Gavin is played by Ryan O'Neal, who gives an ernest, if unconvincing, performance as the youngest general in the U.S. Army.

Like THE BRIDGE ON THE RIVER KWAI and PATHS OF GLORY, A BRIDGE TOO FAR is important primarily as a moving portrait of the courage and folly of men at war.

LUKE WARM, PRIVATE EYE by Dave Burd
EPISODE 3


I'LL GIVE YOU ONE WEEK TO GET ME BACK MY 20 G's.
YOU'LL GET YOUR USUAL FIFTY BUCKS A DAY PLUS EXPENSES.
AND IF I (GULP) DON'T DELIVER THE MONEY BY NEXT FRIDAY?
LUKE WARM PRIVATE EYE
YOU WON'T NEED THE FIFTY BUCKS A DAY.
HELLO EFFIE?
LUKE WARM
YES MR. WARM?
HOLD ANY CALLS, I'M ABOUT TO BEGIN A VERY IMPORTANT CASE.
FRI. 5

GLEANINGS FROM THE SILVER SCREEN by Ed Via
(continued)

THE ONE AND ONLY

A Legend In His Own Mind

At a certain crucial point in "The One And Only," Carl Reiner's hilarious follow-up to "Oh God", Henry Winkler, as college student Andy Schmidt, tells the girl he wants to be with so very badly that his parents died in a car crash when he was twelve. "And don't say you're sorry," he adds in a strained voice. "All right, I won't," she says earnestly. "But I am sorry." "Oh yeah?" Winkler deadpans. "What if I told you I was driving the other car?"

This gag typifies the tone of the film, which doesn't take itself or anything else very seriously and expects you to do the same while it's running. Henry Winkler is splended as the egotistical, emotionally insecure young man who is quite certain that he'll become a fine actor even if no one else thinks so. His tunnel vision is so acute that he sits up and takes a bow after falling down with a spear in him in the school play. Of course, when he finally graduates and marries his girl and takes off for New York in search of fame and fortune, he can't get arrested, as an actor or anything else. He accepts this in the "Life's a lark/Never say die" spirit which marks the entire picture. "Isn't this great?" he cries to his worried wife. "We're starving, we're living in filth! All great actors start this way."

Loosely based on the life of 1950s wrestling sensation Gorgeous George, the script, by talented newcomer Steve Gordon, shows Winkler's character getting involved with professional wrestling out of necessity, not ambition or desire. The freak show aspects of the sport are touched upon briefly, but this is a farce, not a grim character study. Most of the serious sounding lines serve only to set up the humorous wisecracking. The insults the midget wrestler takes from his promoter, and initially, from Winkler, might seem harsh in another setting, but here they are just noisesome patter, utterly without meanness or substance. Ultimately, a strange kind of comaraderie develops between Winkler, the midget, and the promoter, whose name is Harry. When success finally comes to them, they can all bask in its glow, having stuck together in the worst of times in a cruel, rough-and-tumble racket.

In a well-acted co-starring role, Kim Darby plays the girl who finally agrees to marry Winkler because she is "too embarrassed to have him for a date". Darby portrays a reserved character who has led a pretty sheltered life up to the time she meets her future husband, a shy young lady who becomes a devoted wife in spite of all she has to contend with. Also in fine form are her parents, who don't wuite know what to make of Andy, except that he's not the right man for their little girl.

Sharp, witty, often extremely clever in its portrayal of a guy taking his best shot and failing badly, only to bounce back doing something else, "The One and Only" is the pleasant surprise of the current movie crop. Those expecting Henry Winkler to be just like The Fonz will be disappointed, but those who want to go to the movies and have a perfectly marvelous time won't be disappointed at all. Travolta may be the superstar, but Winkler is the one and only.

"House Calls"

Just What The Doctor Ordered

Howard Zieff's "House Calls" is a smart, adult comedy in which Walter Matthau and Glenda Jackson are pitted against each other in a round of verbal sparring that's a match-up between intellectual equals. Their flare-ups on the rocky road to romance are light and amusing and Zieff, whose best previous effort was "Hearts of the West", directs their casual sniping with such a sure hand that everything flows along with a smoothness that prevents the film from getting bogged down, even when what's happening isn't germaine to the romance itself. The script, by Max Shulman, Alan Mandel, Charles Shyer, and "Casablanca"/ Cross of Iron" c0-scenarist Jules J. Epstein, is witty and sharp and sophisticated and keeps the audience laughing throughout the movie's hour and forty minute running time. A fine supporting cast is also on hand, among which the standouts are Art Carney, as a senile, inept old doctor who can't remember where he is half the time, and Richard Benjamin, as Matthau's long-suffering friend and fellow surgeon, who delivers some of the picture' s best lines with a quiet voice and deadpan expression. But it is Carney who gets off the one that tops them all, when, while saying a few words at the funeral of a friend who died as a result of his own incompetance as hospital Chief of Staff, he states that, like all innovators, he wasn't appreciated until he was dead. "Well, Harry," he eulogizes, "you're dead, and we appreciate it."

But "House Calls" is primarily the story of opposites who attract, and despite the picture's many hilarious periferal touches, it is Matthau's Charley and Jackson's Ann who hold our attention. They meet at a time when she is someone else's patient, locked into an old-fashioned head brace that's about as anachronistic as socks with clocks on them. Carney, who really doesn't know what in the hell he's doing, has put her in this contraption, and it is for Matthau to rescure her from it. While still trying to decide whether to do this, which could well endanger his position at the hospital by virtue of the fact that he's taking charge of another doctor's patient, he asks her for some information, including her marital status. In replying, Glenda Jackson, who is unable to talk because of the brace, makes a slashing motion below her throat. "Your husband is dead?" Matthau asks. She shakes her head. He raises an eyebrow. "Wounded?" Their relationship progresses after she leaves the hospital, going from a casual date to something more lasting. He wants to play around now that his wife is dead, but she refuses to share him, forcing a definite decision before he wants to make one. The result is more stormy weather in the form of a tempestuous courtship, highlighted by the couple's reenactment of how past screen lovers must have coped with the old rule which stated that a man and a woman could only be shown on a bed if both of them had one foot touching the floor. The pairing of Mathau and Jackson creates a splendid chemistry that is sure to be a delight to movegoers searching for a contemporary duo to follow in the footsteps of the wacky couples of the past, making "House Calls" a genuine screwball comedy.

--Ed.Via, 1648 Dean Road, Roanoke, VA 24018

PERSISTENCE OF VISION

Since I will be taking over PHOENIX (COMPASS), most of the film news will be appearing there. PERSISTENCE OF VISION will be restricted to reviews & commentary.

Warner Bros. will do TARZAN, which will be written and directed by Robert Towne // UA will do SHEENA,QUEEN OF THE JUNGLE // Oliver Stone will write the script for the Paramount CONAN movie, which is back into production // The animated LORD OF THE RINGS by Ralph Bakshi will be out on November 15, 1978 in wide release. It had a budget of $6 million, and will run 150 minutes. // The budget of the SUPERMAN is up to $50 million now, and it is scheduled to be the major Christmas movie; it will be in wide release December 15, 1978. // Warner Bros. has signed Chuck Jones to direct new theatrical cartoons featuring Bugs Bunny, Daffy Duck, Porky Pig, Road Runner, Wilie E. Coyote, and will direct DUCK DODGERS IN THE 24th & 1/2 CENTURY which Stevie Spielberg will write. Chuck is also advising Stevie on his next movie, a comedy called 1941.

STARCRASH is an Italian film distributed by AIP, with a budget of $4 million and starring Marjoe Gortner, Carolyn Munro, Chris Plummer// INVASION OF THE BODY SNATCHERS, the remake of the 1957 Kevin McCarthy starrer will be released in October. Leonard Nimoy, Donald Sutherland star, it is directed by Philip Kaufman for United Artists. // LILA THE WEREWOLF has been sold to MGM. Beagle will write the script, it'll be produced by Max Rosenberg. // Producer Martin Ranshoff has just finished his filming in Albuquerque, New Mexico for NIGHTWING, the 6 mill. thriller about plague-carrying bats (The Paperback has been out for a few months now). He has cast two complete unknowns, Nick Mancusco, and Kathryn Harrold, for the leads // Earl Owensby is filming a flick called WOLFMAN. // Milton Subotsky's Sword and Sorcery films first release will be DOMINIQUE, a psychological thriller starring Cliff Robertson trying to drive his wife DOMINIQUE into a mental institution (sounds like OBSESSION) It will be directed by Michael Anderson, who directed LOGAN'S RUN and DOC SAVAGE. Subotsky has the MONSTER CLUB and THONGOR pictures also almost ready to go. The MICRONAUTS movie will be directed by Michael Anderson, too, and Milt has signed STEPHEN KING (YES!) to direct a movie based on one of his short stories. // Shelly DuVall will play Jack Nicholson's wife in Stanley Kubrick's production of THE SHINING (based on the excellent book by Stephen King-- it's in paperback now, get it, read it, now!) // George Romero's film MARTIN is out (it's playing midnights at the Waverly in New York; the Waverly's last attraction was THE ROCKY HORROR PICTURE SHOW). George promised, at a recent talk at a MARTIN showing that DAWN OF THE DEAD, the sequel to NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD (which is in color and set in a shopping mall) will be out by Halloween.

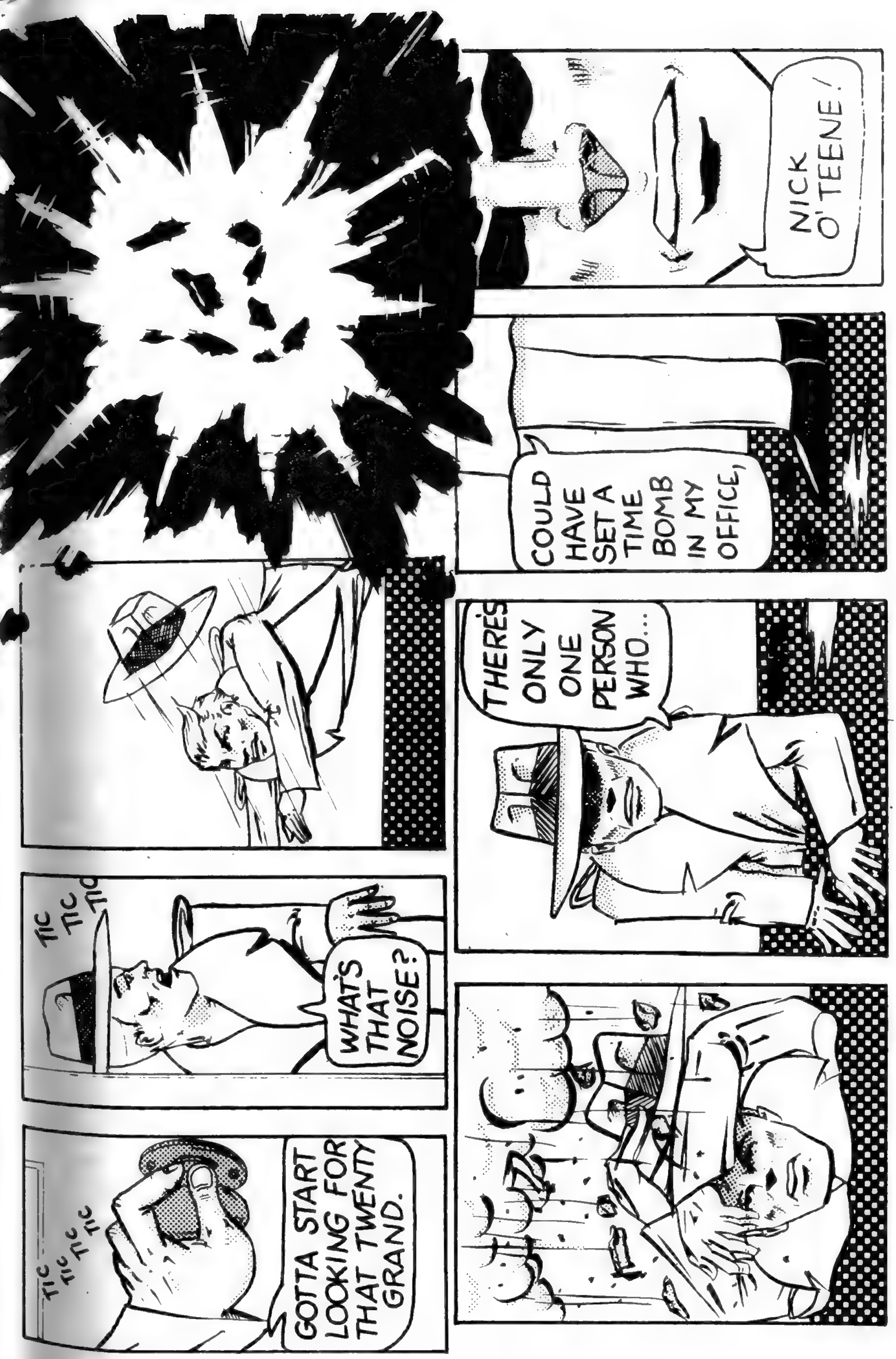
The sequel to STAR WARS will start filming in February '79 for December '79 release. The late Leigh Brackett (who also wrote the STAR TREK script) wrote it, Irv Kirshner will direct, at a budget of $10 mill. All of the cast, including Alec Guiness' voice, will be back.

STAR TREK--The movie will have a mudget of $15 million, Nimoy, Shatner and the rest are all back. Robert Wise (THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL, ANDROMEDA STRAIN, AUDREY ROSE) will direct. Gene Roddenberry and Harold Livingston will write the script from a story by Roddenberry and Alan Dean Foster. New sets are being struck, Rick Sternbach will do the backgrounds. JErry Goldsmith will score the music, Doug Trumbail will advise the spfx unit. It is planned for Summer 1979; filming began in August 1978.

Ivan Reitman, who produced ANIMAL HOUSE, will do David Steinberg's SEX IN AMERICA for Universal. // OLD BOYFRIENDS, directed by Joan Tewkesbury (who was one of Altman's writers on NASHVILLE) written and produced by Paul Schrader and stars John Belushi, Lawrence Luckinbill, Keith Carradine, and John Houseman. // The Muppets have signed to do a feature film, at a budgetof $6 million. // Chevy Chase and Michael O'Donohue are writing a comedy spoofing movie shorts, trailers, and cartoons. // Kurt Vonnegut, Jr.'s HAPPY BIRTHDAY, WANDA JUNE will be re-made by someone named Steven Paul; filming begins this summer. // 1941 and GROWING UP are Steve Spielberg's next movies. 1941 is a $12 mill. comedy. // Burt Reynold's stars in ROUGH CUT. It's got a script by Larry Gelbert (M*A*S*H, O, GOD) and will be directed by Blake Edwards. // Neil Simon's SEEMS LIKE OLD TIMES with Marsha Mason and Burt Reynolds has been scrapped. Simon will ready CALIFORNIA SUITE, directed by Herbert Ross, for Christmas release. // Gene Wilder plays a Polish rabbi hired by a San Ffancisco congregation in 1850, in NO KNIFE. His own film, HAUNTED HONEYMOON, which he'll write and direct, will follow. // HITLER's SON will star Bud Cort (HAROLD & MAUDE) Peter Cushing, Felicity Dean, Willy Hitler (!) with a script by Lukas Heller and Burkhard DRiest, directed by Tod Amateau. //

WOLF LAKE may be retitled SEARCH AND DESTROY, stars Perry King, and Rod Steiger. // APOCALYPSE NOW won't open till Spring 1979. Post-prod problems, or problems with the movie as a Christmas movie (that was the plan originally). Success of Vietnam movies have been spotty. // BORN ON THE FOURTH OF JULY will have Al Pacino as Ron Kovic, from Universal. // Alan J. Pakula will direct COMES A HORSEMAN WILD AND FREE with James Caan, Jane Fonda, and Jason Robards. // THE DEER HUNTER stars Robert DeNiro, the recently deceased John Cazale, John Savage, is directed by Michael Cimino for Universal. //

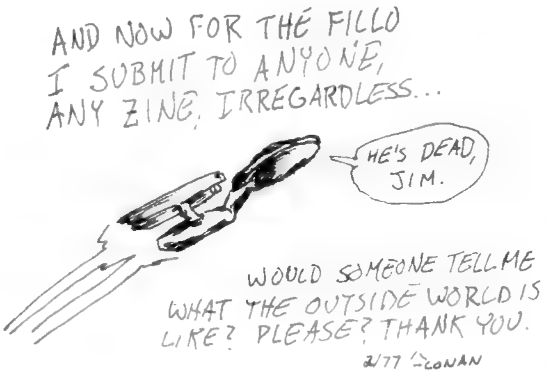
ROSE, a pseudo-Janis Joplin bio, stars Bette Midler. // HAIR, directed by Milos Forman recently held a be-in in New York's central Park //THE WIZ with Diana Ross, Richard Pryor, Michael Jackson will be out October 27, 1978. / Martin Scorsese is directing Robert DeNiro in a film based on the life of boxer Jack LaMotta. // THE CHAMP, stars Ryan O'Neal, Jon Voight, Faye Dunaway, and is directed by Franco Zeffirelli. // Ken RUsell's next movie will be an sf film, SPACE GOSPEL, for Paramount. He will begin on his adaptation of Bram Stoker's DRACULA , soon, too. // Columbia will distribut REMEMBER MY NAME, by writer/director Alan Rudolph, starring Geraldine Chaplin, Tony Perkins, Berry Berenson, Moses Gunn. It's produced by Robert Altman. // Sylvester Stallo writes, directs and stars in PARADISE ALLEY, will be released November 3, 1978. // GREASE will most likely have a sequel, as will SMOKEY AND THE BANDIT. Some more sequels now in production: GODFATHER III (script by Puzo), ROCKY II, GONE WITH THE WIND, PART II, BEYOND THE POSEIDON ADVENTURE, AND 39 STEPS, and OLIVER'S STORY, out Christmas 1978, with Ryan O'Neal.


TIC TIC TIC TIC
GOTTA START LOOKING FOR THAT TWENTY GRAND.
TIC TIC TIC
WHAT'S THAT NOISE?
THERE'S ONLY ONE PERSON WHO...
COULD HAVE SET A TIME BOMB IN MY OFFICE,
NICK O'TEENE!

LUKE WARM, PRIVATE EYE by Dave Burd
EPISODE 4

PERSISTENCE OF VISION (continued)

Anthony Quinn, James Mason at a budget of $6 million. // GREEN ICE stars Richard Burton, for Sir Lew Grade productions. Its based on Gerlad Browne novel. // WHEN YOU COMIN' BACK, RED RYDER?, directed by Gilbert Cates, starring Marjoe Gortner, Peter Firth, Hal Linden and Lee Grant, now has a new ending, unlike the play by Mark Medoff in which Marjoe escapes at the end, in the movie version, Peter Firth kills Marjoe in the sand dunes. // Peter Ustinov, Michael Caine, Rex Harrison, Omar Sharif are in ASHANTI, about contemporary Arab slave dealers. // AIP's C.H.O.M.P.S. about a bionic watchdog, stars Valerie Bertinelli from "One Day At a Time." // Michael Moriarity walked off the set of THE NINTH CONFIGURATION, and producer/writer/director William Blatty. // STEEL is about steel constructors, starring Lee Majors, Art Carney, George Kennedy, and directed by Steve Carvel. It begins filming July 1978. // THE BIG FIX, starring Richard Dreyfuss, will be released October 13, 1978 // AVALANCHE EXPRESS, produced and directed by Mark Robson, stars Robert Shaw, Lee Marvin, Maximilian Schell, Linda Evans. // MOMENT BY MOMENT stars Lily Tomlin and John Travolta. Written and directed by Jane Wagner (Tomlin's writing partner), it will be ready Christmas 1978. // THE SHOUT, with Alan Bates, Susannah York, John HUrt, Robert Stephens, and Tim CUrry (from Rocky Horror!), written by Michael Austin and Jerzy Skolimowski, and directed by Skolimowski is looking for distribution right now. //Reader's Digest will produce James Herroit's ALL THINGS BRIGHT AND BEAUTIFUL. // Gah! ALOHA DONNY AND MARIE, director is actor Howard Morris. // Altman's next feature will begin shooting in September. // AMERICAN GIGOLO is produced by Freddie Fields, and directed and written by Paul Schrader, about a young man facing a society dominated from liberated women, begins filming in September 1978. // CLOUD DANCER, written by Richard Goodhart and Barry Brown and produced and directed by Barry Brown, stars David Carradine, Jennifer O'Neill, and Joseph Bottoms. // THE COMING OF PHILO BODEO, starring Clint Eastwood and a large chimpanzee. // Glenn Ford, Susan George, and Maximillian Schell appear in CONCISION. // THE EAGLE'S WING has Martin Sheen, Sam Waterson, Harvel Keitel, John Briley is writer and Anthony Harvey is director. // Sir Lew Grade presents ESCAPE TO ATHENA, George Pan Cosmatos is the director, Richard S. Lochte II and Edward Anhalt are the writers, the music is by Jerry Goldsmith and the cast includes Roger Moore, Telly Savalas, David Niven, Stephanie Powers, Claudia Cardinale, Richard Roundtree, Sonny Bono, and Elliot Gould. // Ted Post directs FORT TRAVIS, starring Richard Harris and Karen Black will be released in October, 1978. // GROWING UP, directed by Steven Spielberg will be set in Phoenix (Steve's home town). Most of the cast is 8-14 years old. // ICE CASTLES is directed and written by Donald Wrye, music by Marvin Hamlisch, and with Robby Benson, Colleen Dewhurst, Tom Skerritt, Jennifer Warren. JUST A GIGOLO stars David Bowie, Sydne Rome, Kim Novak, David Hemmings, Maria Schell, Curt Jergens, Marlene Dietrich. Bowie plays a Prussian soldier who gets into the 'escort' biz after returning to Berlin after WW 1. // KING OF THE GYPSIES by the DeLaurentiis company stars Susan Sarandon, Brooke Shields, Shelly Winters, Eric Roberts. // LOST AND FOUND produced and directed by Melvin Frank began filming March 6, 1978 with George Segal, Glenda Jackson, Maureen Stapleton. // MEMORIES with ELLiot Gould, SUsannah York, and Deborah Raffin began shooting May 5, written by Ted Allen ("Lies My Father Told ME") and directed by a 19-year old director, Steven Paul. // THE NAKED SUN began filming in late March in Brazil, and stars Margeux Hemingway. // NORTH DALLAS FORTY has Nick Nolte as the lead. For Paramount. // SANDS stars Jenny Agutter, Michael York. // VOICES has Amy Irving ("Carrie" "The Fury") and Michael Ontkean, from MGM. //



I would appreciate any leads anyone can send me on developments in movies or television. Send all news to Bill-Dale Marcinko, RPO 5009, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ 08903. Now, for an ad from George Belden...

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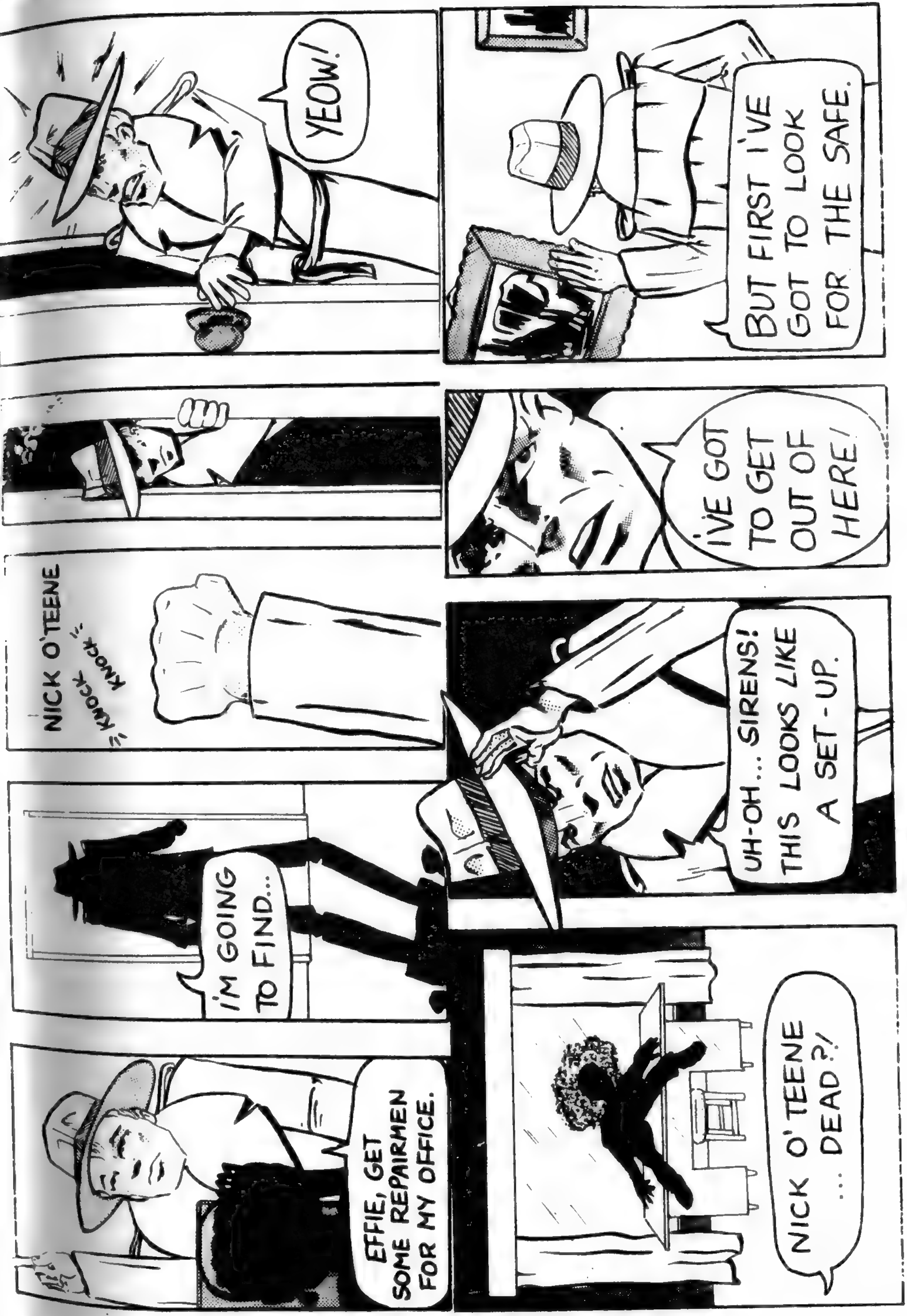
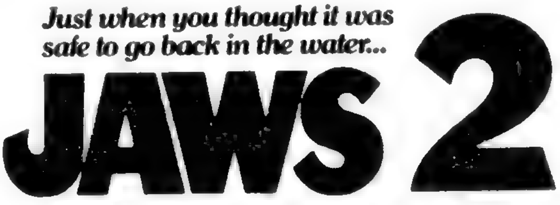

EFFIE, GET SOME REPAIRMEN FOR MY OFFICE.
I'M GOING TO FIND...
NICK O'TEENE
KNOCK KNOCK
YEOW!
NICK O'TEENE ... DEAD?!
UH-OH... SIRENS! THIS LOOKS LIKE A SET-UP.
I'VE GOT TO GET OUT OF HERE!
BUT FIRST I'VE GOT TO LOOK FOR THE SAFE.

LUKE WARM, PRIVATE EYE by Dave Burd
EPISODE 5

MORE PERSISTENCE OF VISION

by bill-dale marcinko

First, some more news, which just came in since I did the main body of the movie news. Burgess Meredith has just completed his role in Joe Levine's prod. of William Goldman's book MAGIC. // David Bowie will produce a big-screen documentary A DAY IN THE LIFE OF DAVID BOWIE, David Hemmings (who directed JUST A GIGOLO) will call the shots. // Steve Guttenberg (from the Chicken Chronicles) will have the part of a 25-year old tennis hustler in PLAYERS, produced by Bob Evans. // Anthony Newley is preparing a musical based on the life of Charlie Chaplin, with Newley starring as Chaplin, called of course, CHAPLIN. // Columbia Pictures paid $9 million to do the film version of ANNIE, the Broadway play. // Mel Simon (producer) bought a roadside diner in Faben, Texas for the interiors of WHEN YOU COMIN' BACK, RED RYDER?, which, if it is anything like the play, should be a real blockbuster. To be released in October: THE WILD GEESE (with Richard Burton, Roger Moore, Richard Harris and Hardy Kruger), SOMEONE IS KILLING THE GREAT CHEFS OF EUROPE (Jackie Bisset, George Segal), THE BOYS FROM BRAZIL (Laurence Olivier, Gregory Peck), AGATHA (Dustin Hoffman), GOING SOUTH (Jack Nicholson), (which I thought was supposed to be released this summer, oh, well), And COMES A HORSEMAN WILL AND FREE (The Vietnam movie starring James Caan, and Jane Fonda). One to avoid that month is the ALOHA DONNY AND MARIE thing with our favorite real-life Ken and Barbie dolls. To the reviews-- nothing I can get really enthusiastic about, so my contribution to filmic analysis will be (thankfully) short this issue. An excellent rock documentary THE LAST WALTZ, two mildly funny pictures, THE END and THE CHEAP DETECTIVE, a Peckinpah flick CONVOY and two klinkers, the big sequels for the summer, JAWS 2 and OMEN 2. First, JAWS 2...


Just when you thought it was safe to go back in the water...
JAWS 2

At one point in this travesty, when the kids are stranded in the twisted wreckage of the sailboats, one of the girls turns her head to Heaven and wails, "Oh, Jesus, help us... please."

This, of course, is the pivotal line of the movie. Jaws is a frightening, harrowing movie. But the victims are the audience. The horror is that they thought we would be suckered in to see it, when it doesn't really have anything original or interesting about it. It makes you realize the true talent of Spielberg and the artistry of JAWS 1. There is not a single iota of artistic motivation in the movie at all--just economic. I did have a ray of hope at the beginning. After sitting through the tedious, almost heartwarming stories of about a dozen truly obnoxious teenagers, I thought, now, if the director were just a bit demented... and I envision a massive finale where the shark would eat all the teenagers are all mauled and their limbs are strewn all over the Atlantic. Now that would have been justice. But things were not to be. When the final confrontation came, Iwas truly rooting for the shark, but things were not to be.

The audience seemed to be enjoying themselves. But that might have alot to do with the fact that they were seasoned moviegoers like us (ha ha). They probably saw one movie (JAWS) in the last two years outside of STAR WARS, and this was a real event. They had fun, in their quaint Pavlovian way. It would go like, they would sit quietly, munching on popcorn, fiddling around with their pocketbooks or picking their noses, until they heard the familiar chords that prefa all the attacks or near-attacks. Then they would sit up in their seats, a husband would whisper to his wife: "IT's coming, you can tell 'cause of duh music." Oboy.

Like Pavlov's dogs, they would drool, scream, and jump on command. If you look at JAWS 2 as an experiment in low-order Pavlovian training, it is quite successful. There are enough killings and near-killings prefaced by the John William's chords. And what more can we ask for? The shark is killed at the end, and everyone goes home happy, talking about this killin or another. But if you look at JAWS 2 as a movie, which is the way I think most of us would take it, it doesn't even qualify for the title. Thedirector Szwarc is inept, inenpt, inept. Filming everything in the most boring way imaginative way-- the movie lacks real suspense, rea emotional involvement, real acting, real camerawork, real writing. The sad thing about it, is it will be at least mildly successful, and the kids, seeing the countless teenagers in the movie, will identify with their plight in their own moronic childlike way, and FLOCK to the movie, like schools of minnows. Those with any sense of quality should smell the dead fish.

DAMIEN
OMEN II

Not a particularly outstanding movie. Not particularly good, not particularly bad. Mediocre. It continues the saga of Damien, who is now about 15, and is staying with his uncle (William Holden). We've seen it all before in THE OMEN, with a reporter trying to tell Holden of the TRUE secret of Damien, and a lab technician (who discovers Damie has jackal blood) are dispensed with, along with Damien's cousin, aunt, and many others in more or less interesting ways. Ho hum. Some of the scenes work well, the ending was a real surprise to me, Robert Foxworth is very nasty as a disciple, and two of the killings are rather effective-- a black lab tech gets zapped in two, vivasected by a live electric wire in an elevator, and one which is really neat-- a friend of Holden's goes under the ice at a gathering on a lake, and the current takes him under. His body travels under the ice and you can see it (the ice is clear). It is quite garish watching the people scrambling about running after the man and pounding on the ice. Really twisted. Beyond that, not a whole lot.

PERSISTENCE OF VISION (continued)

by Bill-Dale Marcinko

A Martin Scorsese Film

THE LAST WALTZ

United Artists

A beautifully photographed and directed film by Martin Scorsese, of the 1976 last concert of THE BAND, which sported appearances by Bob Dylan, Joni Mitchell, Neil Diamond, Van Morrison, Eric Clapton, Dr. John, many others... Scorsese takes an incredible amount of care in setting up all the shots and filming the proceedings exquisitely; however, he lacks a talent as an interviewer, stuttering through the questions like a nervous fan... Still in all of this, the members of the Band really shine, Robertson and Danko projecting a sexy boyish charm and the rest complementing them beautifully. The concert footage which has few shots of the audience,really puts the audience right into it. This concert footage is intercut with interviews with each of the members, most of the time really relating as a whole to what is happening on the stage. Scorsese also rented out a studio for a week to do three songs right in the studio, zooming, panning, and dollying around the stage giving all sorts of bizarre angles, points of view and close-ups. Absolutely brilliant film.

If Ever I See You Again

Joe Brooks' second movie (the first being YOU LIGHT UP MY LIFE) is a supposedly autobiographical story of a long lost love of Brooks' in college that he gets a second chance at 10 years later. Brooks may be the only person whose life is like a commercial for United Airlines, and this again, is the major flaw in the movie. Unlike YOU LIGHT UP MY LIFE, which had Didi Conn, this movie has got songs which sound like jingles for commercials, and a filmic style more suited to tv than film. He tries for sentiment and nostalgia, and he just comes off silly, although the sequences with the commercial execs ("We want a meaty sound") are occasionally funny (like the "Wedding Clam" sequence in YOU LIGHT UP MY LIFE) , this movie generally flounders around embarrassingly. Joe Brooks is an engaging actor, but needs a better script. He produced, directed, and wrote this film, and should not have.

BURT REYNOLDS "THE END"

Burt Reynolds directed it (his first attempt), and although uneven, it is still interesting and marks a departure for Burt from the good ol' boy roles he's been playing up to now. Burt is reminiscent of Jerry Lewis here more than anyone else, with physical comedy predominate. There are some true classic scenes, everything with Dom DeLuise, who killed his father because he "was so Polish", who Burt meets while at a mental hospital (you see, Burt finds out he is going to die in 6 months, and decides to take the honorable way out through suicide), a young priest (played superbly by Robby Benson) to which Burt gives his last confession (Benson: "Call me Dave if it makes you feel better." Burt: "Bless me, Dave, for I have sinned.") Benson probes him about all Burt's affairs--just hilarious! And a psychiatrist with a self-help suicide treatment program (the doctor drops dead of a heart attack) who has a classic line (Burt: "Was that a Freudian slip?" Dr.: "Either that, or a boo-boo.") The film is basically a two hour death joke, with Burt churning out some of the best deadpan delivery and black humor that you'll ever find. It could be easily offensive, but if you are sick, and I know I am, then you'll just eat it up.

Neil Simon's "THE CHEAP DETECTIVE"

Wonderful little parody (homage?) to CASABLANCA and the 40's detective films; Peter Falk plays Lou Peckinpaugh, and magnificently so. Neil Simon wrote, Robert Moore directed (they did MURDER BY DEATH), and it is packed to death with big-name stars, and self-conscious, sophmoric, juvenile comedy. Well lit, well directed, the sets are terrific, and the performances are excellent. If you liked MURDER BY DEATH, you'll love it. More cohesive, well plotted than MURDER, it is a fine experience, a loving tribute, and a fun (if juvenile) comedy. See it.

CONVOY

Sam Peckinpah meets Smokey and the Bandit

This movie zips by at an incredible clip, and the action shots and acts of violence are choreographed beautifully in slow motion (as much as I'm a pacifist I must tip my hat to Sam for the fight in the diner-- just beautiful!) Basically it is Smokey and the Bandit with punch (the story was based on C.W. McCall's song CONVOY)-- an unsettling mix at best, throwing in a little more violence than what can be laughed away, giving us equally realistic/ambivalent heroes and villains, social comment on politicos and racism, plus pseudo mysticism (at one point, Kristofferson says "I don't know why all these people joined us, perhaps they have nothing else). Kris Kristofferson plays an unwilling savior ("I'm not leading them, I'm just in front) who has amassed a 100 truck convoy which everyone has their interpretation of (I see it as kind of a populist, Walt Whitman type vehicle--see the scene where everyone is showering together), Ali MacGraw as a wishy-washy type of character, a pseudo-drifter/photographer who Kris picks up to give a ride to Seattle, Kristofferson is great as Rubber Duck, the leader of the convoy, and Ernest Borgnine was never so evil (his line "I am the law" is terrific) as a corrupt sheriff who will do anything to stop Kristofferson (state police, helicopters, National Guard, holding a friend as "bait"). It may be a bit silly, but it all works well.

Slipped Discs RECORD REVIEWS

"The only meaningful statement is a singularly personal one."

I am one of the few people who believe that. It is not 'professional' to expose yourself too openly in the music you make. It is not 'professional' to make a statement with your music, without first considering your audience. In fact, it may not be 'professional' today to make a statement at all. By that definition, all the albums I've lined up below are not by 'professional' persons, but rather strange people with a set of peculiar quirks. The thing that links the following reviews by me, is that each artist takes a very individual and unique stance, and attempts to communicate some kind of 'message.' I don't mean a social or political message, no, I'm not into that, but I won't be reviewing BEACH BOYS type music, music done purely to entertain, without any kind of central theme at its core. I do not go into detail about the music (because my ignorance of professional music is huge) or the producer and who he took out to lunch,or countless references to past albums (many of these people don't have that many past albums). This is not to set a pattern for future issues, or anything.

I bought all these albums as a combination birthday present (my birthday was May 24, thank you), and pat on the back for getting a straight-A average this semester at college ('cause no one will pat me on the back, and I still need attention, some kind of recognition of my work). But I am being an egotistical S.O.B. (Silly Old Bill) You want to hear about Springsteen Warren Z., Tom Robinson, Elvis Costello, Lou Reed, Patti Smith, and not me. So let's get down (Draw Blood!)...

SPRINGSTEEN

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN. DARKNESS ON THE EDGE OF TOWN. (Columbia, 35318, 1978).

Bruce sounds more vicious and intense on this album than he ever has before, with quite effective results. Bruce is, of course, a child of The Big Bad Street. Racing around the town, leaning up a lot against walls and parked cars, Bruce got his education about love and life Out On The Streets. He is determined to tell us why and how again and again. He will glorify this lifestyle to the hilt, although there is less glory and more desperation on this album. He may be grown up now, and not grope around in the back seats of Chevys anymore, but like Meat Loaf, he is resurrecting it for us. But unlike Meat Loaf, who resurrects a vision of the past, Bruce infuses his with surrealistic philosophical and emotional meaning. Most of his songs tell of attempts to find a romanticism in the events of everyday people on the Street. Some process of coming to grips with his surroundings is always at work in him; on the surface, most of this 'coming to grips' has to do with either driving around very fast in cars (Born to Run) or making out (Prove It All Night, on this album, which has been released as a single, too)

That's on the surface. Springsteen is not just quaint romanticism. Springsteen's romantic vision is intense. It is visually and emotionally stimulating. He creates poetic images with the skill of a true artist. Although it is easy to look at him as a good rock and roller (which he is, one of the best, the arrangements on this album are driving and want to make you really jump), a good time punk, like the Beach Boys if they had grown up in Asbury Park, who plays good music for us to rock to. No. His strength for me rests in the fact that he is not just another Southside Johnny and the Asbury Jukes, out to enterta us above everything else.

He is much more. On three previous albums (GREETINGS FROM ASBURY PARK, THE WILD, THE INNOCENT AND THE E STREET SHUFFLE, and of course, BORN TO RUN) he created sensitive, beautiful odes to his youth as a street punk. But until now, he has just been talking about his experiences (althou I'm sure many people identify with him nonetheless, since he is a powerful singer and performer). It was up to you to either appreciate him for what he is, or if you were like him, identify with his memories. Since I am a middle class WASP intellectual who was/still is a radical-of-sorts, and I was raised in a more or less sterile suburbial enviroment, the latter has been somewhat out of reach for me.

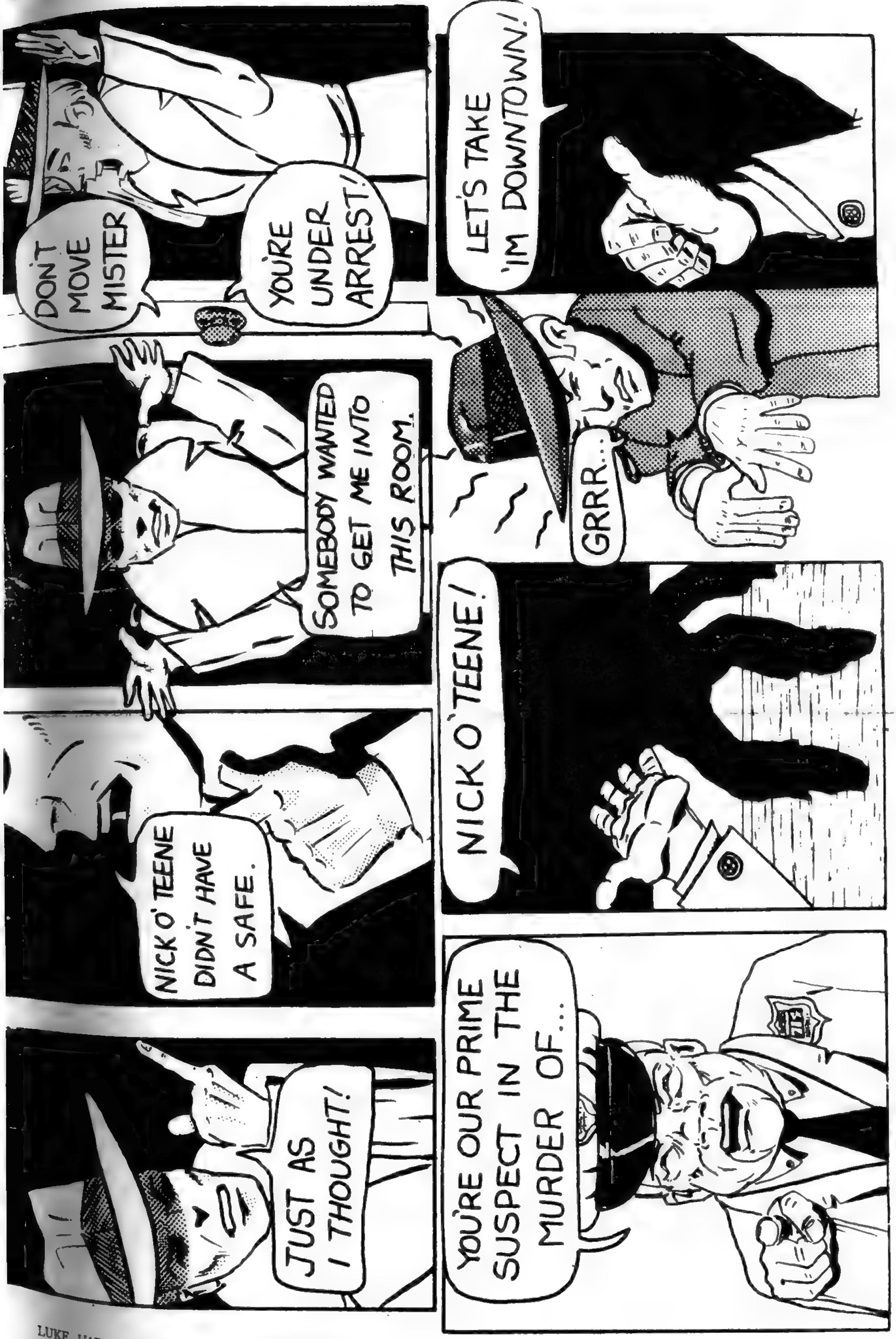
But with DARKNESS, it all changes. His singing is hoarser, louder, more frightened and he leaps the bounds of his enviroment make some real observations, which can be generalized to any enviroment, suburbial or rural, city or not. He is desperate. When he says,

> There's a dark cloud rising from the
>   desert floor,
> I packed my bags and I'm heading straigh
>   into the storm
> Gonna be a twister to blow everything dow
> That ain't got the faith to stand its
>   ground
> Blow away the dreams that tear you apart
> Blow away the dreams that break your heart
> Blow away the lies that leave you nothi
>   but lost and brokenhearted
> The dogs on main street howl,
> 'cause they understand,
> If I could take one moment into my hands
> Mister, I ain't a boy, no, I'm a man,
> And I believe in a promised land...
>   (from PROMISED LAND)

he communicates much more than regional color. These words are easily generalizable The portrait on DARKNESS ON THE EDGE OF TOW is of a person on the edge of madness, tak up in a desperate frenzy that drives him o determined to shape things right in a world he can't quite understand. He is an idealist who is finding out the world is dark and cruel. He is a romantic whose simple dreams are unworkable. In PROVE IT ALL NIGHT, he tells us that:

> Everybody's got a hunger, a hunger they
>   can't resist,
> There's so much that you want, you deser
>   much more than this,
> But if dreams came true, oh, wouldn't
>   that be nice (which Bruce sings in a
>   naive, childlike tone)
> But this ain't no dream we're living
>   through tonight
> Girl, you want it, you take it, you pay
>   the price...

The other songs, too, exemplify this anger, this sensitivity to hopes and dreams, but the simultaneous anger at an enviroment tha will not sustain the dreams. BADLANDS has


JUST AS I THOUGHT!
NICK O'TEENE DIDN'T HAVE A SAFE.
SOMEBODY WANTED TO GET ME INTO THIS ROOM.
DON'T MOVE MISTER
YOU'RE UNDER ARREST!
YOU'RE OUR PRIME SUSPECT IN THE MURDER OF...
NICK O'TEENE!
GRRR...
LET'S TAKE 'IM DOWNTOWN!

LUKE WARM, PRIVATE EYE by Dave Burd
EPISODE 6

Bruce demanding that "These badlands start treating us good" His aspirations?

Baby, I got my facts
Learned real good right now
Poor man wanna be rich
Rich man wanna be king
And a king ain't satisfied
Till he rules everything...

Bruce does want everything. But he is horribly caught up, dragged down by his past. In ADAM RAISED A CAIN, a driving punk rocker that sounds like a Patti Smith or Elvis Costello tune, he cries:

In the Bible Cain slew Abel
And East of Eden he was cast
You're born into this life paying
For the sins of somebody else's past,
Daddy worked his whole life
For nothing but the pain
Now he walks these empty rooms,
Looking for someone to blame,
You inherit the sins, you inherit
  the flames
Adam raised a Cain.

This theme is picked up again in FACTORY,

End of the day, factory whistle cries
Men walk through these gates with death
  in their eyes,
And you better believe, boy,
Somebody's gonna get hurt tonight,
It's the working, the working, just the
  working life.

The other songs chronicle his own and other people's attempt to cope in the enviroment which stifles their dreams. Songs like SOMETHING IN THE NIGHT, CANDY'S ROOM ("In Candy's room, there are pictures of her heroes on the wall,/but to get to Candy's room, you gotta walk the darkness of Candy's hall/There a sadness hidden in that pretty face, a sadness all her own, from which no man can keep Candy safe."

Or in DARKNESS ON THE EDGE OF TOWN,
Everybody's got a secret, Sonny,
Something that they just can't face,
Some folks spend their whole life trying
  to keep it,
They carry it with them every step that
  they take
Till some day they just cut it loose
Cut it loose or let it drag 'em down.

Bruce does mumble his way through most of the lyrics, and tries to jame an extra word or syllable in here and there (not as severly as in some of his past albums), but I'm not bothered by it. I'd adds to his sense of pressing escape. Bruce Springsteen isn't completely satified with just making out in the Darkness On The Edge of Town, and until he reconciles it, we're in for some more completely engrossing and invigorating music. Buy this album if you have to sell a member of your family into white slavery.

WARREN ZEVON

WARREN ZEVON. EXCITABLE BOY. (Asylum, 6E-118, 1978)

Warren Zevon is a protege of Jackson Browne (Browne produced EXCITABLE BOY and Zevon's first, WARREN ZEVON). He is part of the L.A. "Desperado" set. Yes, rock music does have its own regional stereotypes. New Jersey has a street punk/Springsteen type of music, New York a sleazy Punk Rock sound, and Los Angeles has got the Desperado. The key thing with a Desperado is to act like an outlaw, like you are a criminal from the Old West. The only incongruity is that people drive around endlessly in cars, not stagecoaches. The Desperado Sound in country-rock is easily recognizable. There are offshoots not based in L.A., Pure Prairie League, The Outlaws, but the prime examples of the L.A. Desperado cult are THE EAGLES and LINDA RONSTADT, plus all the clones that flit from album to album, always appearing on each other's album to help their friends out. Do I sound antagonistic towards the Desperado? Not as much as Zevon, who does a marvelous extension of the Desperado on his album. Oh, these people are ok. Linda Ronstadt is fine, but the change over to the "sex kitten" image she has now makes me think fondly of the natty hair and high leather boots. The Eagles are too much for me, too damn serious in their image, with that wonderful "Desperado" fold-out from HOTE CALIFORNIA which my roommate haunted me with by pinning up on his wall for 4 months (but what seemed like for 4 years). Jackson Browne is not really a dangerous person, so he doesn't really qualify as a desperado. He is much too maudlin anyway, and never talks about being in trouble with the law (now I know I said last issue Jackson Browne was my favorite singer, but bear with me, I'm trying to make a point).

But Warren Zevon, yes, Warren Z., now there's another person altogether. Warren is aware of the Desperado image whic exists around the L.A. cult, and plays it to the hilt, by extending it's implications to morbidity and absurdity. The Desperado bec the horror film director. Like William Castle, who was aware of the fact he was making horror films and never wanted to be taken too seriously, Zevon wants to have fu with us. Although some would call into question my idea of fun at this point.

I like Warren Zevon. I think he's neat. (How's that for a quoteable quote for the newspaper ads?) But I can't place why. I think it has something to do with the fact that he's putting us on, and he knows it. We know it. And it works. On the cover of EXCITABLE BOY, the photo is cute and has no rough edges ("Retouched," Zevon said.)

SLIPPED DISCS (RECORD REVIEWS)
by B.D.M. (continued)

but it has just enough of a hint of his lower teeth bared. On the inside jacket, he's got a Smith and Wesson .44 layed smack in the middle of a plate of his wife's cooking (oh, he just recently broke up with his wife, if you care). And the songs, not a clinker in the bunch, 'cept for NIGHTTIME IN THE SWITCHING YARD (Zevon calls it "a mood piece"). It is just a throwaway.

How can anyone deny the charm of the title cut, EXCITABLE BOY, when he sings

> He took little Suzie to the Junior Prom
> And he raped her, and killed her, then
>   he took her home
> Well, he's just an excitable boy
> After ten long years they let him out
>   of the Home
> And he dug up her grave and built a
>   cage with her bones
> Well, he's just an excitable boy.

All the time backed up by Linda Ronstadt and her wimpy do-wop girls, going 'oooohh-waaahh' while Zevon cranks out the most garish lyrics to hit the scene in a long time? The song borders on a satire of Ronstadt and the whole oooohh-waaahhh group of female singers the Desperados have on hand to back up their Western anthems.

My favorite cut on the album is ROLAND THE HEADLESS THOMPSON GUNNER. Following Zevon's obsession with larger than life heroes (see FRANK AND JESSE JAMES on his first album), he chronicles Roland's story:

> Through sixty-six and seven they fought
>   the Congo war
> Fingers on their triggers, knee-deep in
>   gore
> For days and nights they battled the Bantu
>   to their knees,
> They killed to earn their living and to
>   help out the Congolese.

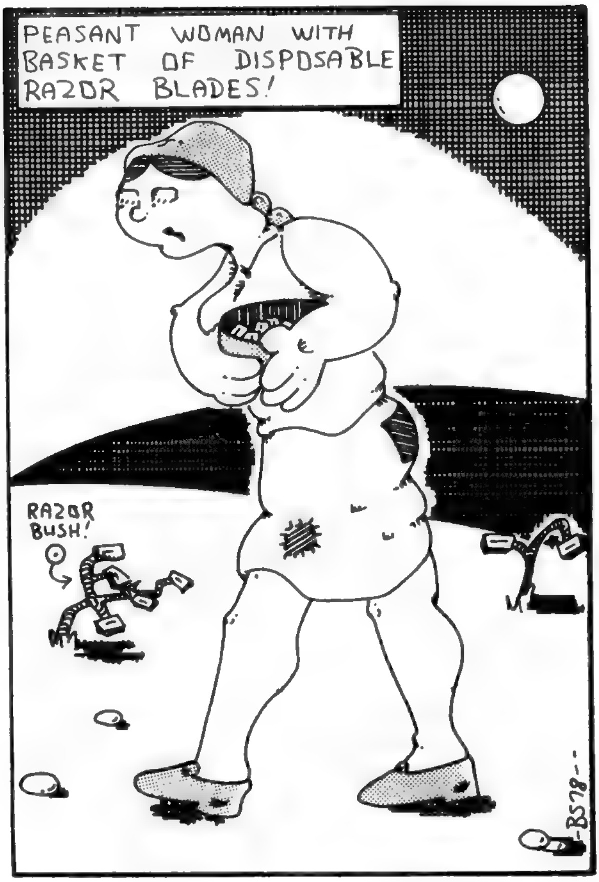
The chorus during the first half of the song is "Roland the Thompson gunner" repeated a few times over. But...

> His comrades fought beside him--Van Owen
>   and the rest
> But of all the Thompson gunners Roland was
>   the best
> So the CIA decided they wanted Roland dead
> That son-of-a-bitch Van Owen blew off
>   Roland's head

The chorus then becomes "Roland the headless Thompson gunner." Great stuff. The song doesn't end there, for Roland's ghost (or body, I don't know, and it is better not to ask) wanders around till he finds Van Owen, the man who did him in, and blows Van Owen's body "From there to Johannesburg." The end verse takes a curious turn, as Roland's ghost becomes a symbol for professional violence all over the world, and the innocent (?) ballad becomes social comment "The eternal Thompson gunner still wandering through the night/Now it's ten years later but he still keeps up the fight/In Ireland, in Lebanon, in Palestine and Berkeley/Patty Hearst heard the burst of Roland's Thompson gun/And bought it."

WEREWOLVES OF LONDON is an enigmatic song of a werewolf (what else?) stalking the streets of London, and Zevon's big AM hit, with lines like "If you hear him howling around your kitchen door/Better not let him in/Little old lady got mutilated late last night/Werewolves of London again." Plus, at the end of two verses are tagged ironic observations. After he tells us

> He's the hairy-handed gent who ran amuck
>   in Kent
> Lately he's been overheard in Mayfair
> Better stay away from him


PEASANT WOMAN WITH BASKET OF DISPOSABLE RAZOR BLADES!
RAZOR BUSH!
BS78

bill sherman

> He'll rip your lungs out, Jim

he adds offhandedly, "I'd like to meet his tailor." The mundane is confused with the unbelievably melodramatic, and the werewolf in complimented on his clothes.

> I saw a werewolf drinking a pina colada
>   at Trader Vic's
> His hair was perfect.

The images do not jive properly; that is the beauty of the song. (Grateful Dead, by the way, will be doing this song in their summer tour)

The album includes two wry little masterpieces. LAWYERS, GUNS AND MONEY, in which Zevon (as a naive hero who gets embroiled in intrigue unwillingly) pleads with his father:

> Now I'm hiding in Honduras
> I'm a desperate man
> Send lawyers, guns and money
> The shit has hit the fan

It all started you see, with a plot twist from a cheap spy movie,

> Well, I went home with the waitress
> The way I always do
> How was I to know
> She was with the Russians, too?

Another cut, JOHNNY STRIKES UP THE BAND, seems to be a pleasant enough song about a rock band (or even swing band) impresario ("They'll be rocking in the project/Walking down along the strand/Freddie get ready/Rock steady/When Johnny strikes up the band") until you listen closely and find out that Johnny is a heroin dealer ("And Johnny is my main man/He's the keeper of the keys/He'll put your mind at ease/He's guaranteed to please/Back by popular demand.") A wry, sardonic song with catchy hooks and tight guitar work by Waddy Wachtel.

The music here is undeniably the L.A. Jackson Browne sound, but with a difference.

SLIPPED DISCS (RECORD REVIEWS)
by B.D.M. (continued)

Here it is tighter, there is more percussion, and it is hard drums, not soft Jackson Browne rhythms. Zevon's album takes him out of the Eagles/Ronstadt/Browne country-rock, soft-rock Cult, and puts him in a prominent rock and roll figure.

His voice-- it hardly seems to belong to that huggable little boy on the cover-- it is gruff, hoarse, full, and sounds like he is containing an explosion with every pause. When he says "HAH!" or "Draw Blood!" (at the end of WEREWOLVES), I get chills. He doesn't really breathe, it seems, it is almost like he is always holding his breath. His vocals are powerful and evil, like he is trying to contain a horrible energy from being released. He barks the lyrics rather than sings them. Like an insane werewolf dressed in a three piece suit, he is having loads of fun. He is pretending he is evil, and doesn't want us to find out differently. He enjoys his desperado image. So do we. When asked recently if the gun on the inside jacket was his, he replied, "Not that one."

Of course, there is a softer, more vulnerable side to Zevon. He steps out of self-conscious melodrama long enough to do a sensitive ballad, VERACRUZ, and two other more or less normal songs, one a Jackson Browne collaboration about an adolescent girl coming of age. Of course, Zevon is no Jackson Browne (perhaps thankfully so) and the song (TENDERNESS ON THE BLOCK) is not just a mushy flip side of Jackson's DADDY'S TUNE (about a father and son). Zevon sings it with a commanding, almost threatening tone:

> Daddy, don't you ask her when she's coming in,
> And when she's home don't ask her where she's been
> She's going out
> She has a young man waiting.

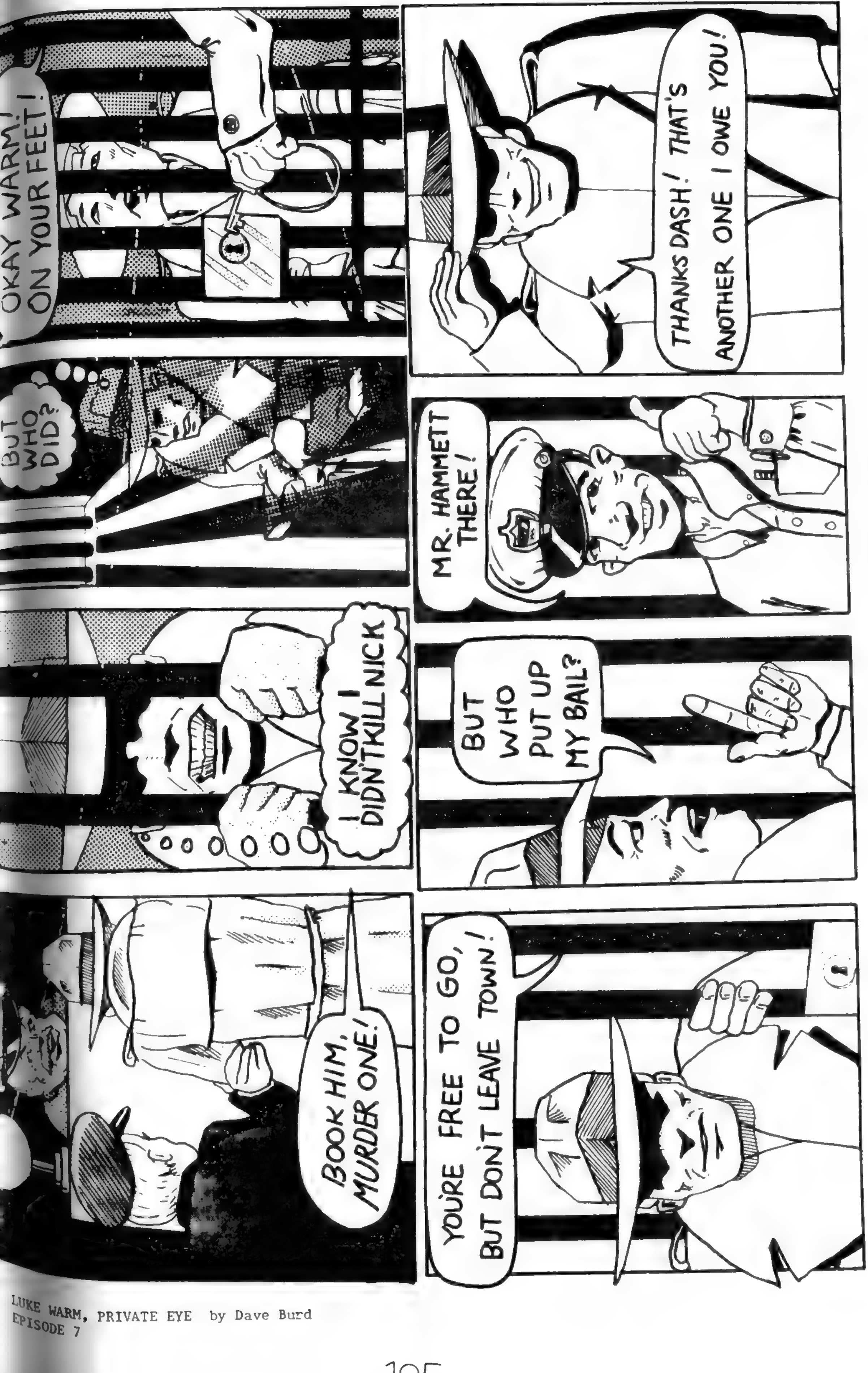
The sensitive side of Zevon is showcased further in ACCIDENTALLY LIKE A MARTYR: "The days slide by/Should have done, should have done, we all sigh/Never thought I'd ever be so lonely/After such a long, long time." A superlative collection, far superior to Zevon's first album, which is too mundane for me (it includes, too, such later Ronstadt hits as Hasten Down the Wind, Poor Poor Pitiful Me, and Desperados Under the Eaves.

Generally, I don't particularly care for punk rock music, but there are a few notable exceptions, some (TRB, ELVIS, LOU) more notable than the others. Herewith, my reviews of the latest albums by the TOM ROBINSON BAND, ELVIS COSTELLO, LOU REED (who was 'punk' before anyone ever coined the word), PATTI SMITH GROUP, NICK LOWE, DAVID JOHANSEN and BLONDIE (I have not heard a number of new albums, including those by ROOT SLIM, IAN DURY, PERE UBU, so I make no pretense that this complete, even for me, and I welcome additions...)

TOM ROBINSON

TOM ROBINSON BAND. POWER IN THE DARKNESS. (Harvest-STB-11778, 1978) The American version has 2 12" albums and a number of new songs, as opposed to a single 12" and an E.P.on the Brit version...

Punk rock's roots are in the disatisfied, alienated British youth, most of them middle or lower class people, stuck in what amounts to a economic pinch, not helped any by the right-wing sentiment of the policemen and politicos in Britain. Sounds like the 60's in America? You bet. And Tom Robinson is the MC5 of 1978 Punk Rock. They are gorgeously political, self-righteous, and ready for a revolution. Most punk rock (at least American punk rock) does not address itself to the same kind of anthemizing that TRB does. The punk rock bands here (from Kiss (punk for 8-year olds, boy, are we teaching them young today)) to The Ramones (who seem to be the American punk rock idols, and in my book, totally without warrant) are taken up with the garishness and grotesquery of the clothes and what not, glorifying the grotesque for THE MERE THRILL OF DOING SO, preaching armageddon because armageddon gets club dates and sells record . TRB is different. They have roots, a targe for their music (TRB by the way is a member of ROCK AGAINST RACISM (wi the yellow fist on bl background its symbol and has ev included quote by, all people, ERIC IDLE of Monty Python o the back their al I don't k whether American audiences really ca to hear ab fascism a racism a how we ha to band together fight the revolution but for TRB is a fresh spla of cool wa in the ari


BOOK HIM, MURDER ONE!
I KNOW I DIDN'T KILL NICK
BUT WHO DID?
OKAY WARM! ON YOUR FEET!
YOU'RE FREE TO GO, BUT DON'T LEAVE TOWN!
BUT WHO PUT UP MY BAIL?
MR. HAMMETT THERE!
THANKS DASH! THAT'S ANOTHER ONE I OWE YOU!

LUKE WARM, PRIVATE EYE by Dave Burd
EPISODE 7

SLIPPED DISCS (RECORD REVIEWS)
by B.D.M. (continued)

desert of disco and Donny & Marie. TRB presents punk rock at its finest--undiluted, straight-forward, and in all of the driving rhythms, quite charming. Tom Robinson, the head and creative genius of the group is quite a likeable and attractive fellow (oh, and before the obvious questions start popping up in your alleged minds, Tom is gay, but the other members of the band aren't), proving his total charm with MARTIN (a wonderful little ditty which turns into a singalong (it is recorded live))--it's about Robinson's brother (or lover, we're not sure, since he speaks of his brothers with the meaning of fellow gays (the same way lesbians have been calling each other sisters for years), and 2-4-6-8 MOTORWAY (the single which first catapulted them to fame in England early this year and GREY CANTINA (all non-political songs, 2-4-6-8 a decent rocker which I'm told they play at soccers matches in England, and GREY CANTINA, all about Tom's obsession, as he quotes himself on the album jacket, "to own a smoke-grey silver fox supercharged 1600E 'J' registered furlined four door Ford Cortina." But Tom Robinson's skill shows best in his other songs, most of them, "right-on" 60's-type anthems for gay rights (a major subject here), anti-fascism, and anti right-wing sensibilities. The 17 songs on the American version are musically inventive and original (while still staying within the punk rock mold), and enthusiastic (not since the 60's has there been such idealism in a group's work. With titles like AIN'T GONNA TAKE IT, UP AGAINST THE WALL, BETTER DECIDE WHICH SIDE YOU'RE ON, you know what you're getting. Powerful, but not necessarily violent songs. Robinson knows how to write an anthem and turn a phrase without turning over tables and breaking heads.

The WINTER OF '79 is a frightening projection of a totalitarian/fascist take-over, and is told as a reminiscence (you should have seen the WINTER OF '79, etc.)

In POWER IN THE DARKNESS, about halfway through the song, Robinson slips into an editorial commentary (which I'm told to accompany it on stage, he wears Groucho nose glasses for) which goes like:

"Today institutions fundamental to the British institution of government are under attack. The public schools, the House of Lords, the Church of England, the holy institution of marraige, even our magnificent police force" (over the narration is a single drum, plus far off in the background, haunting cries and screams of agony) "no one is safe from those who will undermine our society, and it is time we said, enough is enough, and return to the traditional British values of discipline, obedience, morality, and FREEDOM!! Freedom from the reds, and the black and the criminals" (the spoken narration slips into rhythm with the music, and Robinson does a kind of sing-along with the drum and electric bass) "prostitutes, pansies, and punks, football hooligans, juvenile delinquents, lesbians, and left-wing scrum, freedom from the niggers and the Pakis and the unions, freedom from the gypsies and the Jews, freedom from the long-haired layabouts and students, freedom from the likes of YOU!

The most outstanding song on the album has to be Robinson's GLAD TO BE GAY. Robinson is viciously ironic here. He sings it as a kind of a gay pride song, but not an upbeat one, a happy one-- but a savagely bitter one. After each verse (some of which are below) he cajoles the audience into a singalong, "Sing... if you're glad to be gay, sing if you're happy that way" while the sad irony of the verses put a strange twist to the proceedings. He introduces the song as "a medical song, dedicated to the World Health Organization. It concerns a disease whose classification, according to the national classification of diseases, is '302.0'." It begins:

The British police are the best in the wo
I don't believe all those stories I've heard
'Bout them raiding our pubs for no reaso at all
Lining the customers up on the wall
Taking out people and knocking them down
Resisting arrest as they're kicked on the ground
Searching their houses, calling them QUEER!
I don't believe that sort of thing... happens...here.

The key to the song is a restrained bitterness and irony, pointing out the contradictions without damning the perpetrators outright (like other punk rockers do)--

Pictures of naked young women are fun
And tidbits of Playboy, page 3 of the Su
There's no nudes in Gay News, our one magazine,
But they still found excuses to call it obscene
Read how disgusting we are in the press,
The Telegraph people, the Sunday Express
Molesters of children, corrupters of you
It's there in the paper, it must be the truth.

And...

Don't try to kid us that if you're discr
You're perfectly safe as you walk down the street
You don't have to mince or make bitchy remarks
To get beated unconscious and left in th dark
I had a friend who was gentle and short
He was lonely one eveing, he went for a walk
The queer bashers caught him, they kicke in his teeth
And he was only hospitalized for a week.

And so it goes, as they say.

ELVIS COSTELLO

ELVIS COSTELLO. THIS YEAR'S MODEL. (Columbia, 35331, 1978)

Elvis Costello is a misanthrope. He's got the sexual approach and talent of Woody Allen (with similiar results), except tha he doesn't laugh about it. He is angry, very angry, and determined to have things his way like a spoiled child. He is willi to smash all the blocks if it doesn't go right. He is insecure. He is confused. And he may very well be the most interesti face to hit the music scene in the last couple of years.

He is an idealist, a romantic (althoug he won't admit it, the close he gets to i on this album is on LIPSTICK VOGUE where he says "I almost feel like a human being." And he hates the false and pretentious, th cheap emotions, the false emotions-- he i suspicious of everything. Violence is hi only choice, since things didn't work ou

LIPPED DISCS (RECORD REVIEWS)
by B.D.M. (continued)

right, He has got an incredible lyrical skill, and packs his songs full of lyrics, puns, and literary devices that us English majors could have a field day. His punk rock arrangements are more interesting than most standard fare.

He is the one person Bob Dylan wanted to see after his concert in L.A. not too long ago ("He's really a normal guy,"Bobby remarked)

He bears watching.

Closely.

Elvis' songs are horrible, urgent, and pumped up with drums, pounding, pounding, pounding relentlessly over his sometimes inaudible lyrics and vocal styling.

Everyone is out to get Elvis. He is the perfect paranoid, the perfect psychotic. He twitches spasmodically on stage, staring straight ahead most of the time. He is a goof-ball, a nurd, he is a 15-year old, clumsy, gawky adolescent who is having trouble adjusting to his sexual urges. But there is one difference. This particular adolescent has got a loaded machine gun. Which means you better listen to what he is going to say. What does Elvis say on his new album?

Elvis is mad at everyone, everything. From plasticity and phoniness in women to radio programming he has his say. There's even a song about masturbation (Pump it up, when you don't really need it), PUMP IT UP. What more can you ask for?

To Elvis women are sneaky seducers:

Little triggers that you pull with your tongue
Little triggers, I don't want to get hung up, strung up, when you call up.

They don't call him back on the phone. And Elvis, in typical form, won't admit his true feelings and in "NO ACTION", the first song on the first side, tells his girl instead:

I don't wanna kiss you
I don't wanna touch
I don't wanna see you
'Cause I don't miss you that much
I'm not a telephone junkie,
I told you we were just good friends
Everytime I phone you I just wanna put you down.

But even in that, he falters, and later in the same song admits he's having second thoughts:

But the things in my head are hurting my mind
I think about the way things used to be.

He hates phoniness, emotions which pass for real, girls which pass for real, but aren't. He tells us about it in THIS YEAR'S GIRL:

You're still hoping she's well spoken 'cause she's this year's girl
You want her broken with her mouth wide open 'cause she's this year's girl
Never knowing her real attraction
All these promises of satisfaction

Those disco synthesizers, those daily tranquilizers,
Those bought and built-in prizes, those bedroom alibis
All this, but no surprises, for this year's girl...

Suffice it to say that the Cheryl Ladd/Barbi Benton/Farrah Fawcett Majors fluffy haired box of cosmetics fits the above bill nicely.

Two of the better songs on the album are LIVING IN PARADISE AND RADIO, RADIO. LIVING IN PARADISE is a song of paranoia, betrayal, and even, yes, voyeurism,

I don't like those other guys looking at your curves
I don't like you walking 'round with physical jerks, everything they say and do is getting on my nerves...
Later in the evening when arrangements are made, I'll be at the keyhole outside your bedroom door
'Cause I'm the first to know where the plans are laid
You think I don't know the boy you've been touching
I'll be at the video and I won't be watching

and in RADIO, RADIO, in which he takes apart the radio biz, to wit--

I was tuning a show on the late night dial
Doing anything the radio advised
With everyone of those late night stations
Playing songs bringing tears to my eyes,
I was seriously thinking about hiding the receiver
When the switch broke, 'cause its old
They're saying things that I can hardly believe
They really think we're (the punk rockers) getting out of control

Elvis is mad at everyone, including the people who brought him his success:

I wanna bite the hand that feeds me
I wanna bite that hand so badly
I wanna make them wish they'd never seen me.

But Elvis is mad at the people who take it most of all:

Some of my friends sit around every evening and they worry about the times they had
But everybody else is overwhelmed by indifference and the promise of an early bed
Either shut up or get cut up,
They don't want to hear about it, it's only inches on the reel to reel
And the radio is in the hands of such a lot of fools trying to anesthetize the way that you feel...

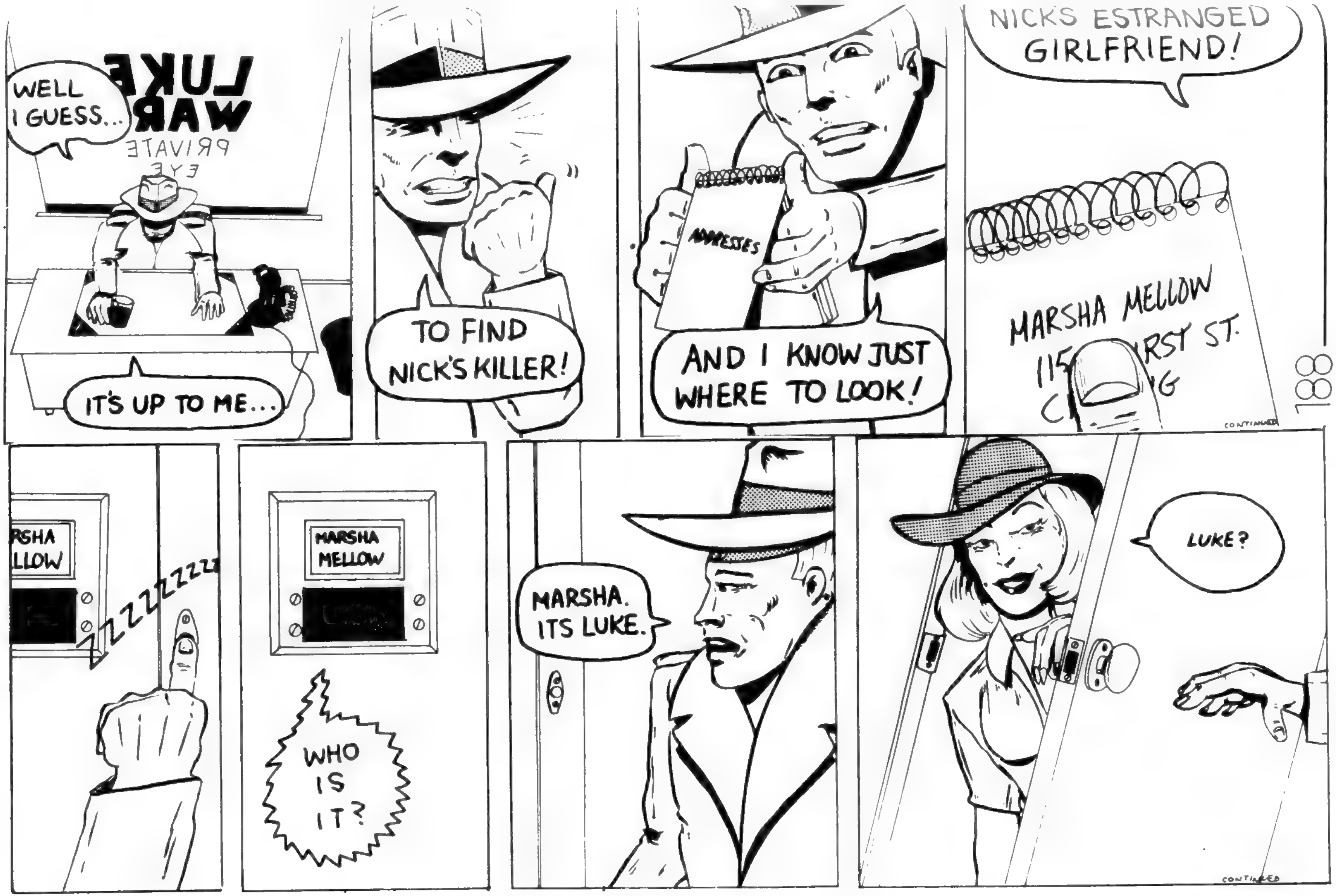
And like Howard Beale proselytized in NETWORK, caring starts with getting mad, mad as hell. If that is any criteria, then Elvis cares a whole lot.

LOU REED

LOU REED. STREET HASSLE. (Arista-AB4169, 1978)
No one does Lou Reed like Lou Reed.
And Lou Reed hasn't done Lou Reed as well as on STREET HASSLE for a long, long time.

I AM THE WALRUS
Doug H. '78

LUKE WARM, PRIVATE EYE by Dave Burd
EPISODE 8


WELL I GUESS...
LUKE WARM PRIVATE EYE
IT'S UP TO ME...
TO FIND NICK'S KILLER!
ADDRESSES
AND I KNOW JUST WHERE TO LOOK!
NICK'S ESTRANGED GIRLFRIEND!
MARSHA MELLOW
115 RST ST.
C G
CONTINUED
RSHA LLOW
ZZZZZZZZZ
MARSHA MELLOW
WHO IS IT?
MARSHA. ITS LUKE.
LUKE?
CONTINUED

SLIPPED DISCS (RECORD REVIEWS)
by B.D.M. (continued)

With his claustrophic heavy metal/punk arrangements, weird syncing of vocals and music, offbeat phrasing (which is not so much singing, as a talking, sing-song sort of quaver), Lou Reed takes use through a world of drug overdoses, death, decadent sex, and general vile deeds. The results are haunting. Listening to this album is an honest-to-God frightening experience, not unlike being stuck alone in the back alley of a large city at 2:00 in the morning. You hear voices and shouts coming from one end of the alley. The other end is closed off, and you have nowhere to go. It is horrible, but the horror is poetic. This is what Lou Reed is best at, making the horror of low life in the city poetically real. Although the album doesn't hold up that well on side 2, except for WAIT and I WANNA BE BLACK. To give you some idea of why STREET HASSLE or for that matter, few of any other of Lou's albums get any airplay on the radio, some of the lyrics to I WANNA BE BLACK go:

I wanna be like Malcolm X, and cast a hex over President Kennedy's tomb
And have a big prick, too
I don't wanna be a fucked-up middle class college student anymore,
I just wanna have a stable of foxy little whores
I wanna be black.

The high point of the album is a nervewracking 11 minute odyssey, STREET HASSLE. A single cello plays a repetitive but extremely catchy rhythm line, as Lou narrates one of his stories about stray sexual encounters and death by drug overdose (a standard Lou Reed theme). It is obscene, harrowing, and will stick in your mind for a long time. To give you a taste of it,

Hey, that cunt's not breathing, I think she's had too much
Or something or other, hey man, you know what I mean,
I don't mean to scare you, but you're the one who came here,
And you're the one who's got to take her when you leave.
I'm not being smart, or trying to take over my part,
And I'm not gonna wear my heart on my sleeve
But you know, people get all emotional and they don't act rational
You know, they think they're just on TV
Sha - la - la, man why don't you just slip away?
You know, I'm glad that we met man, it was really nice talking,
And I really wish there was a little more time to speak,
But you know it could be a hassle, trying to explain yourself to a police officer,
About how your old lady got herself stiffed
And it's not like we could help, 'cause there was nothing no one could do
If you know man, I woulda been the first
But when someone turns that blue, it is a universal truth,
And you just know that bitch will never fuck again
BY the way, that's some bad shit that you came to our place with
You oughta be more careful around the little girls
Why don't you grab your old lady by the feet
And just lay her out in the darkest street
And by morning she's just another hit-and-run
You know some people have no choice and they can never find a voice
To talk with that they can even call their own
So the first thing that they see
Allows them the right to be
Well, they follow it, you know what it's called
Bad luck.

The album is recorded impeccibly in something called STEREO BINAURAL SOUND, and with the headphones, the effect is damn excellent! This is not for the squeamish or easily offended, though!

PATTI SMITH

PATTI SMITH GROUP. EASTER. (Arista-AB4171, 1978)
This is easily Patti's best album, more musically driven rock than was in HORSES, with her lyrics more audible than in RADIO ETHIOPIA, but the main problem seems to have been and will be her stream of consciousness babbling because it always was and always and my spirit seeks freedom but my flesh seeks semen and the fact that she thinks feels herself a prophet and is pretentious and cannot be reached by bell telephone or anyone on this earth and i'm going to mention semen again for no reason semen and if you don't take her seriously it can be a lot of fun but i wish i wish oh, babbbbby, i wish someone would tell me, speak to me, and tell me what she means in her lyrics and i mean how can anyone take it making herself out to be a prophet, some kind of messiah of rock and roll and i love my guitar because it speaks the word and truth and rock and roll will set us free and semen again and because the night makes some sense for sure because it was written by springsteen anyway
so why dont you come and we will
rise together and perhaps
visit some moslems
because i'm not an american
or maybe we could go to another
planet
where someone may understand the word
the message
the message better the message the message
i am trying to tell you with my guitar because
i am not quite right but then i am from jersey
(which is on earth and that probably is
it and rock and roll and piss will save us
and not semen but
rock and roll

NICK LOWE

NICK LOWE. PURE POP FOR NOW PEOPLE. (Columbia, 35329, 1978, released in England originally as Jesus of Cool)

Nick is a bit of fun. He uses banal pop and bubble gum arrangements and sets to them some of the strangest lyrics you will hear in a long time. The production is perfect, the sound is excellent (Lowe produces Elvis Costello's albums, too) which is something you can't say of all punk rock records. And although the songs are clever, they do not hold up well to repeated listening. Not to deride them. NUTTED BY REALITY starts off with a recognizable disco/calypso bass line, and you expect a light disco or reggae tune, when Lowe sings in a reggae vocal, "I heard they castrated Castro/They cut off everything he had/What a dirty, lowdown thing to do/To mess him up like that." Neat. And my personal favorite, MARIE PROVOST, tells the true story of the remains of a silent movie queen that

SLIPPED DISCS (continued)
by B.D.M.

the LAPD stumbled upon awhile back.

> Marie Provost didn't look her best
> The day the cops burst into her lonely nest
> A cheap hotel up on Hollywood West
> July 29th
> She's been lying there for 2 or 3 weeks
> The neighbors said they never heard a squeak
> But the hungry eyes that could not speak
> Said even little doggies have gotta eat

Lowe tells the story of Marie:

> Marie Provost was a movie queen
> Mysterious angel of the silent screen
> She came out West from New York
> But when the talkies came Marie just couldn't cope
> Her public said, Marie take a walk
> all the way back to New York.

So she pops some pills, and gets ready for that"last big sleep" They found her 3 weeks later:

> The police came in and looked around
> Throwing up everywhere over what they found
> The handy work of Marie's little dacschund
> That hungry little dacshund

You get the idea. The chorus proclaims:

> She was a winner, that became the doggie's dinner, she never meant that much to me.

AND SO IT GOES, HEART OF THE CITY, and I LOVE THE SOUND OF BREAKING GLASS are pretty damn good, too. Heck, I guess I liked this album a lot.

DAVID JOHANSEN

DAVID JOHANSEN. DAVID JOHANSEN.
(Blue Sky, JZ34926, 1978).

Power punk. Brutal, violent, with sharp edges and banging guitars up to volume 10. Johansen (formerly of The New York Dolls) epitomizes the New York Punk Movement, sleazy, cynical, and snippy. DONNA, FUNKY BUT CHIC, LONELY TENEMENT, FRENCHETTE stand out prominently. Finely toned, finely honed punk. Wrought with a steady hand. FRENCHETTE is typical of what you get,

> Your leathers don't scare me, doll,
> 'Cause I know it's only leatherette.
> You call your loving French,
> But it's just Frenchette
> I've been to France, so let's just dance!

The tag line on the end is typical. On LONELY TENEMENT (with some nice violin work by Scarlet Rivera) after a number of verses of sensitive description of the people who inhabit a city tenement, he negates everything with "LET'S ROCK!" A picture of a person left with nothing but the punk that he plays. Since this is an American artist, none of this is at all political. The only drawback is that the album seems a bit overproduced, the band drowning out Johansen in a Phil Spector "Wall of Sound". It is a shame-- Johansen is an intelligent lyricist, and it would be nice if we could hear his vocals the first time without concentrated listening. This is Johansen's first solo album.

BLONDIE. PLASTIC LETTERS.
(Chrysalis, CHR-1166, 1977)

Probably the most inventive and imaginative of the American Punk Rock groups. Blondie, a New York group, sports Debbie Harry, a squeaky, dynamic dish in mini-skirts. Their stance is reminiscent of 50's rockers as is their music. But they are original and clever in their varied arrangements and sylings, and are accomplished musicians. The songs-- well, their effect is mostly one of cheap sensationalism, if nothing else. They deal with National Enquirer-headline material, before the National Enquirer was cleaned up... snipers, kidnappings, spies, and general James Bondish love triangles. At this they work quite well, in fact, even edge on brilliance. On Plastic Letters, there is even a song about the Bermuda Triangle. Deborah (who does all the vocals) screams out the cheap, sensational,(cliched in an Avengers/Man From U.N.C.L.E. kind of way) headlines with desperation, like hawking the latest issue of the Star. Quite good, really. The musical arrangements are varied and interesting.

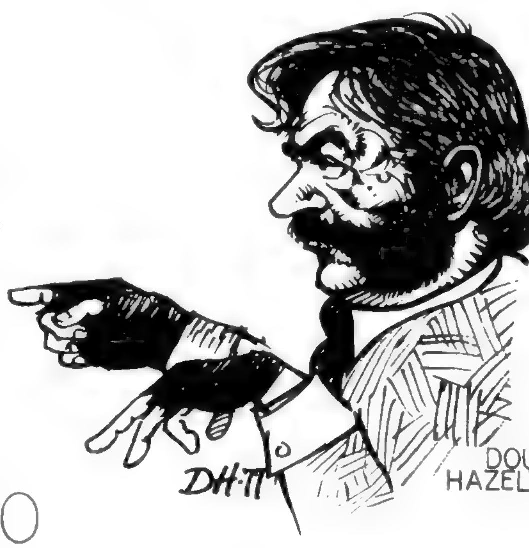
BOB DYLAN

BOB DYLAN. STREET-LEGAL.
(Columbia, 35453, 1978)

I just got a hold of this album, and it is playing as I type this issue up. I am gonna hold until I have time to really do justice to it, but my first impressions of it-- well, I was not struck by it. Clearly Dylan will never mean what he once meant to us. This album has a preponderance of songs about his break-up with his wife Sara. Some of them are rather tiresome, one, NO TIME TO THINK rather pretentiously silly, but most of them very listenable.

A side note-- Dylan has just completed a series of concerts at the Universal Amphitheatre in Los Angeles, and it really seems Dylan has gone commercial. He introduced his songs with sensitive intros like "Here's a song from my new album, Street Legal, on Columbia Records and Tapes!...Like to say hello to Richard Manuel and Raquel Welch out there tonight...Here's a hit song from my hit movie Renaldo and Clara..." Dylan has signed with Jerry Weintraub, Neil Diamond's manager, in order to become more of a "professional" entertainer. Dylan playing Vegas? Not far away.

So much for the counterculture...



DOUG HAZELWOOD

ON FLOWERS ARE RED

by
bill
dale

HARRY CHAPIN. LIVING ROOM SUITE.
(Elektra/Asylum, 6E-142, 1978)

Harry's new album has got a solid amount of good material, some of it cynical, some of it ironic, some plain didactic and preachy.

Harry sounds more urgent and bitter than he usually does. He is outraged at a number of meaty inequities in today's world, and sings about them with his usual dynamic, growling voice. Why Elektra is marketing this album with a soft sell ("Allow Harry to come into your living room") is beyond me. People as self-righteous as Harry don't get invited into many people's homes. But, I suppose Harry is the 70's Phil Ochs (his admiration for Phil Ochs is in fact confirmed by THE PARADES STILL PASSING BY on On The Road To Kingdom Come), and it is no surprise that he works best when outraged. Usually Harry will tell one of his ironic stories about it, and this album is no exception. Here, FLOWERS ARE RED is a superlative Harry Chapin Song of Irony, pure and direct, and right on target. And, since it may be one of his finest, I'll be reprinting it and going into it at length here. But first, some of the other songs: POOR DAMNED FOOL, JENNY, IT SEEMS YOU ONLY LOVE ME WHEN IT RAINS and DANCIN' BOY (although this may be redeemed because of Harry's sincere vocals and catchy melody) are more or less filler. Good songs compared to some of the pap being produced today, but to Harry Chapin fans, nothing new, nothing outstanding. Ah, but the others: IF YOU WANT TO FEEL is a sort of preachy ode for emotional honesty; I love the line "There are callouses that come/ That the lovers got to earn/In the years of your youth/You can't be fire proof/ You know youve got to get burned." Harry growls (unintentionally, I suppose) the last line with a very evil sneer, and it really makes the song (sadistic, aren't I?) I WONDER WHAT WOULD HAPPEN TO THIS WORLD, an idealistic spiritual: "Now if a man tried/To take his time on earth/ And prove before he died/What one man's life could be worth/Well I wonder what would happen to this world" which is interesting merely because the words don't seem to quite fit in with the Negro spiritual arrangement (with John Wallace leading the chorus), WHY DO LITTLE GIRLS, an anthem about the inferior role women must play, which is touching only because the lyrics are posed in questions, using 'little boys' and 'little girls'. He escapes being didactic here. SOMEBODY SAID is powerful, driving song about the loss of idealism in today's society (Harry is the only one who sings about the disillusionment of the 60's spirit in the 70's). When the chorus asks the question, "Somebody said...where are the dreamers?"and Harry replies, sardonically, "Somebody said... dead" it really grips you where it hurts. But all this aside, let us get on to the real point of this piece. The other songs are nice, although I still resent Harry's driving guitars and drums-- he is most endearing with just a guitar or light electrics and percussion, but no matter...

FLOWERS ARE RED is a simple song. But it is so ironic and heartbreaking sad, I was moved quite a bit by it. After hearing this for the first time (on the radio, WNEW in New York played it), I got all choked up. Why? Because what it chronicles is the death of imagination, the death of creativity, the stifling of original thinking. It is no surprise that the perpetrators of the killing is the American educational system. The song is about a little boy's experience at school:

> The little boy went first day of school
> He got some crayons and started to draw
> He put colors all over the paper
> For colors was what he saw
> And the teacher said...What you doin' young man
> I'm paintin' flowers, he said
> She said, It's not the time for art young man
> And anyway flowers are green and red
> There's a time for everything, young man
> And a way it should be done
> You've got to show concern for everyone else
> For you're not the only one
> And she said...
> (CHORUS)
> Flowers are red, young man
> And green leaves are green
> There's no need to see flowers any other way
> But the little boy said...
> There are so many colors in the rainbow
> So many colors in the morning sun
> So many colors in a flower
> And I see every one

Needless to say, the teacher puts him a corner until he complies, and finally, he goes up to the teacher and repeats (Flowers are red, Green leaves are green...) the chorus, what the teacher has "taught" him. Then comes the inevitable Chapin Ironic Twist:

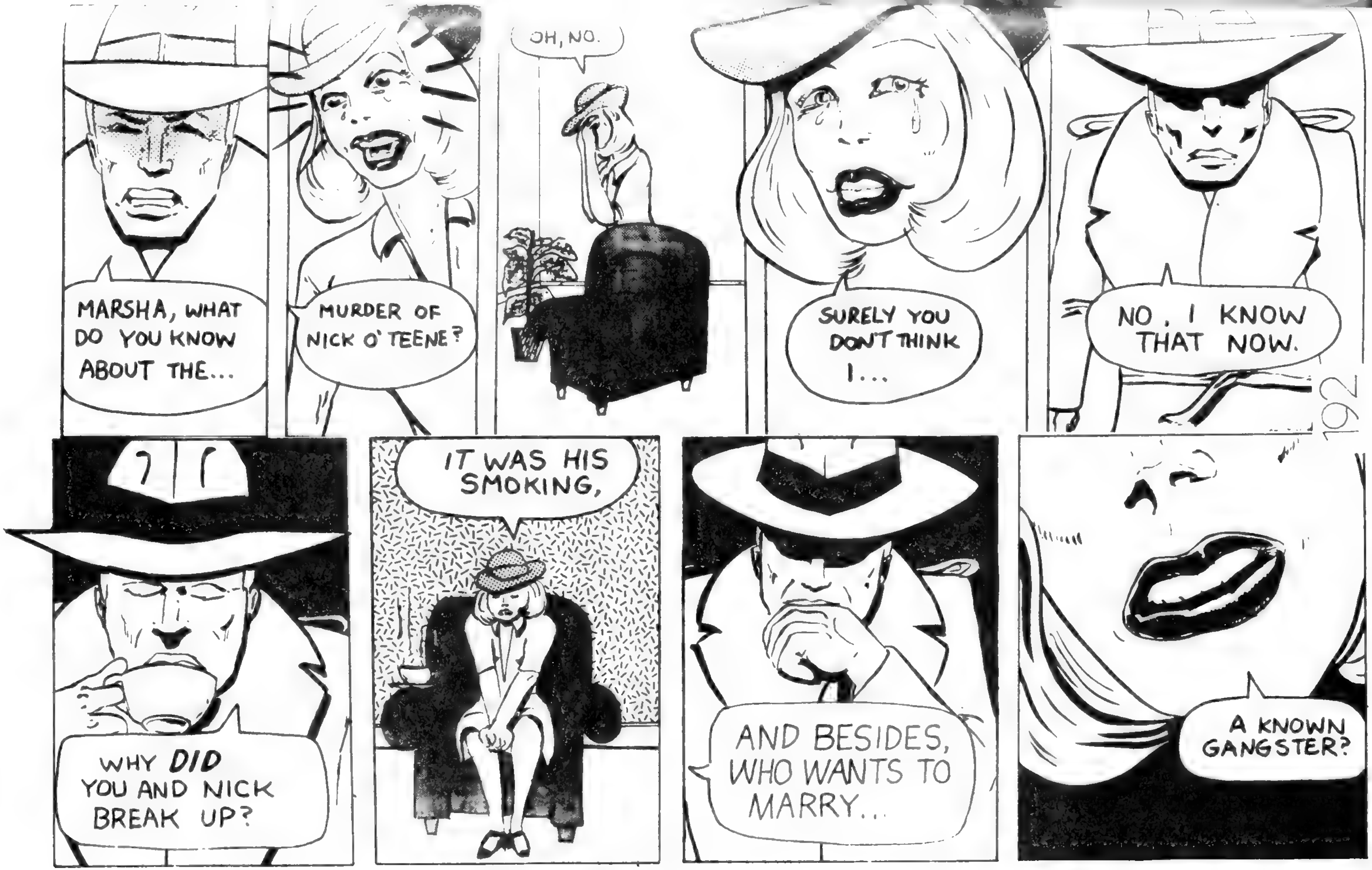
> Time went by like it always does
> And they moved to another town
> And the little boy went to another school
> And this is what he found
> The teacher there was smilin'
> She said...Painting should be fun
> And there are so many colors in a flower
> So let's use every one
> But that little boy painted flowers
> In neat rows of green and red
> And when the teacher asked him why
> This is what he said...and he said,

Well, you know the rest. The boy who saw so many colors in the flower and wanted to paint every one is now thinking like all the other students. And of course, the process is not reversible. He will be painting flowers red and leaves green when he is 40. The implications of this are no less than terrifying, of course.

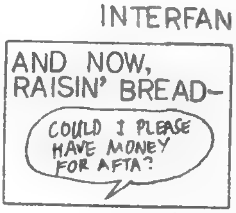
Bravo Harry, for a damned great song.

NEW TIMES magazine reports that the Pentagon is working on a "death ray" code-named "Sipapu"(Indian for "sacred fire") with a charged particle beam which can hit targets miles away. A working model of "Sipapu" is about three years away. If you plan to see Paris at least once in your life, I would do it soon.

LUKE WARM, PRIVATE EYE by Dave Burd
EPISODE 9


MARSHA, WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT THE...
MURDER OF NICK O'TEENE?
OH, NO.
SURELY YOU DON'T THINK I...
NO, I KNOW THAT NOW.
WHY DID YOU AND NICK BREAK UP?
IT WAS HIS SMOKING,
AND BESIDES, WHO WANTS TO MARRY...
A KNOWN GANGSTER?

JERRY '78 ORDWAY


INTERFAN
AND NOW, RAISIN' BREAD-
COULD I PLEASE HAVE MONEY FOR AFTA?

SLIPPED DISCS (Continued)
by B.D.M.

ROLLING STONES

THE ROLLING STONES. SOME GIRLS.
(Atlantic/Stones label, COC-39108, 1978)

An impressive rock and roll album, Richards, Wood, and Watts were never better. Unbeliveably tight, damn well executed. My only complaint is that the sexist/racist lyrics get very repetitive again and again. I think SHATTERED is an excellent song, WHEN THE WHIP COMES DOWN is interesting only because you can argue with your friends about what it is all about (I read that it is supposed to be about a gay garbageman in New York, but I can't find anything in the song to even hint at that--Jagger deliberately mumbles the lyrics and allows the band to drown him out). There is a screwball country song called FAR AWAY EYES which is neat, and BEAST OF BURDEN is very catchy, but the rest... pure gold for RS fans, but for the rest of us, nothing we haven't heard before.

THE KINKS

THE KINKS. MISFITS.
(Arista, AB4167, 1978)

The Kinks have always been sort of an anachronism, never really hitting it big but having a loyal following, producing a lot of albums consistently (23, I believe) but never really being appreciated for what they are. Ray Davies is sort of an anachronism not intense about success, or any particular message, producing clever little songs without a lot of fuss and hardly any hype. He is, as the twisted, distorted cover with his face on it shows, the Head Misfit. In a recent interview, he said, "You could dress me in a gold suit, put all the spotlights in the world on me, and I'd walk on stage and knock something over."

Ray Davies is quite charming, a lovable sort, who has produced a charming little album. If you aren't the type of person that would like the Kinks already, this album may not sway you (I take that back, MISFITS, and ROCK AND ROLL FANTASY are fine, fine songs using anyone for comparison)

The album is truly a theme album (but not in the sense of their theatrical story-theme albums a few years back) in that all the songs are about misfits of one kind or another.

A suicide potential (LIVE LIFE) Ray himself stuck in a black neighborhood ("They knock me down 'cos they brown and I white") and having to hear his friend talk of a BLACK MESSIAH, someone who left England for South America (?) IN A FOREIGN LAND, a heterosexual who just likes dressing up in women's clothes ("You see, he's not a faggot as you might suppose/He just feels restricted in conventional clothes/'Cos when he puts on that dress, he feels like a princess") in OUT OF THE WARDROBE (clever title), two really offbeat ones, PERMANENT WAVES (a doctor tells him he'll improve as soon as he gets new clothes and a perm for his hair, but the perm washes out) and HAY FEVER ("I wanna kiss but I'm sneezin' instead/I can't make love when my head feels like lead." But clearly the masterpieces of the album are MISFITS and ROCK AND ROLL FANTASY. Ray has never been so honest and intense about himself and his reputation. Stripped away of the cuteness which usually masks most of his little ditties, MISFITS is his coming-out (Misfit Lib?):

> You've been sleeping in a field but
> you look real rested
> You set out to outrage but you can't get
> arrested
> You say your image is new, but it looks
> well tested
> You're lost without a crowd yet you go
> your own way
> You're a misfit, afraid of yourself,
> so you run away and hide
> You've been a misfit all your life
> Why don't you join the crowd and come
> inside

ROCK AND ROLL FANTASY is a finely crafted and revealing song. Almost too honest, not just about the people in the music business, but many of the fans...

> There's a guy in my block, he lives
> for rock
> He plays records day and night
> And when he feels down, he puts some
> rock and roll on

SLIPPED DISCS (continued)

By B.D.M.

And it makes him feel alright
And when he feels the world is closing in
He turns his stereo way up high
He just spends his life, living in a rock and roll fantasy

Way to go, Ray.

BOB MARLEY

BOB MARLEY& THE WAILERS. KAYA.
(Island, ILPS=9517, 1978)

If you want reggae music, real reggae music, with social conscience and stirring spirituals, don't look here. Marley, the only reggae artist who has really succeeded commercially in the U.S., has produced an album of wishy-washy love ballads and odes to pot-smoking, er, skanking (gotta learn a new terminology here, Kaya=marijuana) An example: "Excuse me while I light my spliff/Good GOD I gotta take a lift/From reality I just can't drift/That's why I am staying with this riff." What happened to the intense revolutionary? He has sold out, most likely, for American record sales and concert appearances. He has produced an album of banal songs. Don't get this album if you are interested in reggae; hunt down Peter Tosh's EQUAL RIGHTS from last year, or get his new album when it's out (and cross your fingers the same thing doesn't happen).

JOHN PRINE

JOHN PRINE. BRUISED ORANGE.
(Asylum, 6E-139, 1978)

Prine, now recording for Asylum, helped over by Steve Goodman, has got a spotty album here. He sounds better than he ever did, but his wry, sarcastic humor isn't on target the way it was in his earlier albums for Atlantic (pick up his first album JOHN PRINE if you want a real album), but he does manage a few clever numbers: FISH AND WHISTLE ("Father forgive us for what we must do/You forgive us and we'll forgive you/We'll forgive each other till we both turn blue/Then we'll whistle and go fishing in heaven") THAT'S THE WAY THAT THE WORLD GOES 'ROUND ("I know a guy that's got a lot to lose/He's a pretty nice fellow/But he's kind of confused/He's got muscles in his head That aint' never been used/Thinks he owns half this town/Starts drinking heavy, gets a big red nose/Beats his old lady with a rubber hose/Then he takes her out to dinner/And buys her new clothes/That's the way that the world goes 'round.") SABU VISITS THE TWIN CITIES ALONE is poignant and haunting, but the only really solid tune is the title track, BRUISED ORANGE:

You can gaze out the window
Get mad and get madder
Throw your hand in the air
Say, "What does it matter!"
But it don't do no good to get angry
So help me, I know
For a heart stained in anger
Grows weak and grows bitter
You become your own prisoner
As you watch yourself sit there
Wrapped up in a trap of your very own
Chain of sorrow

So, John Prine is not angry. Good for him, bad for us. You see, all the rest of the album is pretty mindless, good time folkie tunes about hobos, a woman miner, and typical, cliched love songs. Although Steve Goodman produces the album well, allowing Prine's raspy vocals and guitar to dominate (unlike on COMMON SENSE), I just wish there was something there that would make this album worthwhile. There isn't.

LOUDON WAINWRIGHT III

LOUDON WAINWRIGHT III. FINAL EXAM.
(Arista, AB 4173, 1978)

Another person who is definitely not working up to his potential. Sardonic and sarcastic, Loudon (who recently appeared on America 2-Night) who is tremendous in concert with his grimacing and smirking and sticking his tongue out while he's playing, is not severly interesting to listen to. Final Exam is good for mention of blue books and #2 pencils, Mr. Guilty, Golfin' Blues, and Natural Disaster passable, and the rest listenable, you wish he would really let loose and go for the jugular.

The following albums aren't really that recent, but I want to say a few words about them nonetheless, (as William W.D. "Bud" Prize would say, "I'm steaming, let me tell you...")

JONI MITCHELL

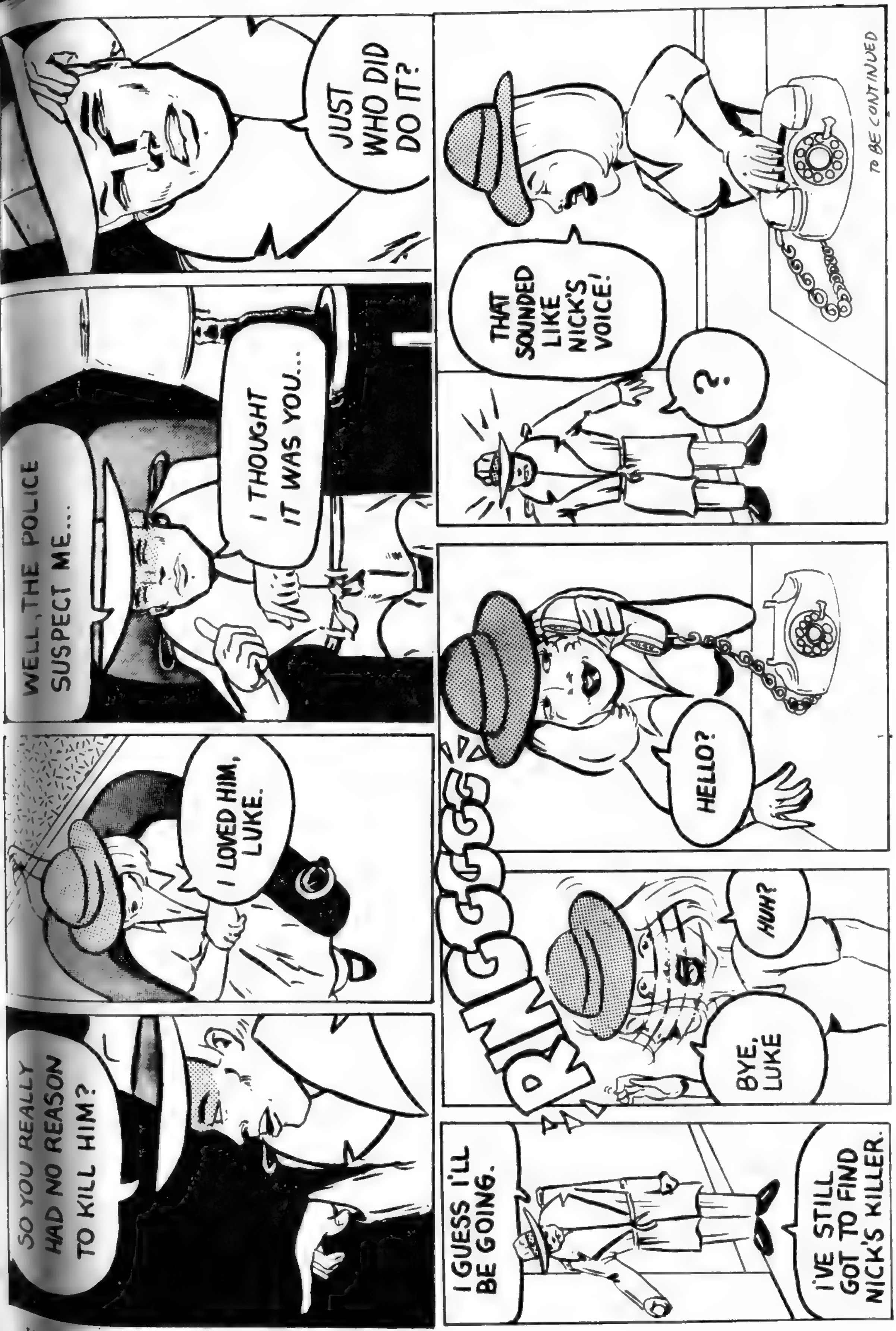
JONI MITCHELL. DON JUAN'S RECKLESS DAUGHTER.
(Asylum, BB-701, double album, 1977)

I paid $10.00 to hear a song from an album I already have (JERICHO, from MILES OF AISLES), a seven minute jungle drum solo, incomprehensible mumbling about her 'black' heritage (when she's a WASP from Canada already), an entire side of PAPRIKA PLAINS (a cut coming in at 16:19, which could have been a 6:19 with no loss), and more babbling about eagles, serpents, spirits, and flesh, endless references to the road in DON JUAN'S RECKLESS DAUGHTER (the only cut on the album which is worth the money), to hear her say "I pissed a tequila-anaconda/The full-length of the parking lot" in TALK TO ME. Joni, fess up, you're not a poetess, you're not our spiritual leader, go back to writing songs like you should. DON JUAN is a double album and it could have functioned well as a long 45, saving us all some money.

JACKSON BROWNE

JACKSON BROWNE. RUNNING ON EMPTY.
(Asylum, 6E-113, 1977)

This is a curious experiment of an album which succeeds well in what it tries to do. It is a live album about touring on the road, with all original songs (as opposed to greatest hits) recorded in buses, backstage and as part of Jackson's tour last year. As an album with that theme, it is excellent, as a Jackson Browne album, it falls short of his potential. Much of this is due to the fact that he wrote (completely) only two songs, RUNNING ON EMPTY and YOU LOVE THE THUNDER. THE LOAD OUT is a powerful, sensitive song and easily the high point of the album, but the rest... I get a feeling of filler. Filler. They seem out of character for Jackson (especially Cocaine), and although it is clear he had a lot of fun doing it, it doesn't break any ground, and is in no way a must-have for Jackson Browne fans. Put last year's THE PRETENDER back on the turntable if you want prime Browne. Or Prine browme (if you are listening to BRUISED ORANGE.)


SO YOU REALLY HAD NO REASON TO KILL HIM?
I LOVED HIM, LUKE.
WELL, THE POLICE SUSPECT ME...
I THOUGHT IT WAS YOU...
JUST WHO DID DO IT?
I GUESS I'LL BE GOING.
I'VE STILL GOT TO FIND NICK'S KILLER.
BYE, LUKE
HUH?
RINGGGGGG
HELLO?
?
THAT SOUNDED LIKE NICK'S VOICE!
TO BE CONTINUED

LUKE WARM, PRIVATE EYE by Dave Burd
EPISODE 10

TO BE CONTINUED IN AFTA #3...

He's been brutalized...victimized...betrayed and alienated.

This time . . . he's fighting back!

DRAGONFLAME
And Other Bedtime Nightmares

by Don McGregor

review by
Jose A. Blanco

DRAGONFLAME & OTHER BEDTIME NIGHTMARES is the product of former Marvel Comics scripter, Don McGregor (BLACK PANTHER and KILLRAVEN) and artist, Paul Gulacy, late of Marvel's MASTER OF KUNG-FU. The book contains the title feature and four short stories, Gulacy's art appearing only in the DRAGONFLAME story ("As digest-type illos rather than comic panels" --Bill-Dale). I found their effors to be a successful blend of prose and illustration.

DRAGONFLAME, is not ultra-modern. He is a street fighter, a throwback to old pulp heroes. He is a loner. A vigilante with Kung-Fu prowess, steeped in the sixties idealism, born of seventies frustration. DRAGONFLAME no longer believes in the system, if he cannot prevent injustice, at least he can avenge it's victims.

Clad in an ebony Zorro-like mask, dark clothing, black boots, carrying a Kanta (Oriental Sword) and 6 hurka throwing knives, his working garments are similiar to a Ninja's. Ulike the silent Ninja, DRAGONFLAME is prone to giving sermonettes. While admonishing the actress of a snuff film, DRAGONFLAME is told "to shove it sideways" by the lady.

Getting back to attire, it is interesting to note the photograph of McGregor at the front of the book has hin wearing the same outfit (Black turtleneck and black trousers) as DRAGONFLAME, in the book's epilogue.

Through headline fashbacks, the reader learns of earlier DRAGONFLAME exploits against power plants and racketeers.

While marking DRAGONFLAME's first appearance in print, the book does not contain an origin, nor does it reveal DRAGONFLAME's true identity. There are glimpses of his past, he served in Viet Nam, visited Japan, and is opposed to nuclear power plants, but little else. McGregor uses this device probably for two reasons (1) It gives DRAGONFLAME an added touch of mystery (2) By leaving his creation's background sketchy, it allows the reader to presume that DRAGONFLAME could be anybody, his neighbor, mailman, or best friend.

Enhancing DRAGONFLAME's reality is his not being able to control the events around him. In his debut story, he almost falls off a fire escape ladder and is not completely successful in his run-in with the makers of a snuff film.

After reading DRAGONFLAME, I recalled a catch phrase on a Bruce Lee poster, "Boy, could we use him now." In a way this sets the stage for DRAGONFLAME; I would approve of his vigilante tactics against someone like "Son of Sam," but where do you draw the line on evil? Where does good begin? It will be interesting to see how McGregor lets DRAGONFLAME walk this tightrope in the future.

The remaining stories are: THE MATING MASSACRE, a story reminiscent of early Stan Lee/Steve Ditko tales, BERNIE CHOJNACKI AND THE TAXI RIDE TO OBLIVION AND BEYOND, a story of fading adolescence, THE PLAY IT AGAIN SAME CASABLANCA BLUES and THE REAL WORLD IS WAITING OUTSIDE, concern people trying to cope in our work a day world.

I will be waiting for DRAGONFLAME to return and spill more mindblood (a term referring to DRAGONFLAME's psyche) in the fall.

--Jose A. Blanco
505 East Tenth, Topeka, KS 66607

("Jose is a hard core cinema freak, especial of fantastique films. He attends Washburn U. in Topeka. He is 24. About DRAGONFLAME, I'd like to thank Dave Kraft of FICTIONEER BOOKS for sending me a review copy free of charge. I'm gonna try to trap Don McGrego in New York next month and get an intervie with him (hear that, Don! You're marked!), talking about DRAGONFLAME in greater detai . This is a fine book, BERNIE CHOJNACKI is a brilliant story, written in an electric dynamic prose style that'll grab you. I recommend it highly. This fall, DRAGONFLAM: Carnage and Crushed Carnations, Among Othe Erotic Expectations will be published, Dav is accepting orders now. Send $5.00 for either of the DRAGONFLAME books (they are trade paperbacks, quite attractive and wor the few extra bucks), using the coupon below..." --Bill-Dale)

ORDER BLANK

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Yes, I Still Read Comics...

(In many ways, this is sort of a sequel to WHY I LOVE AMERICA. Although dissimilar in execution, if you read WHY I LOVE AMERICA (pp. 94-95, AFTA #1) and this *in sequence*, it should make some kind of sense, if you take into consideration that the narrator is basically a 60's person with a bad case of the Seventies sensibility. This could be the narrator a few months after the realization of his prejudices and pathetic patriotism. Perhaps, also, I shouldn't talk in terms of the narrator. Perhaps the narrator is *me*. Is it, you ask? As #2 would say, "That would be telling..." -- Bill-Dale)

Once and awhile, someone on a tv commercial will say something about hunger or crime or GodKnowsPoliticalPrisonersInAfrica.

Every time they do, I write them a letter.

I tell them:

You're not fooling anyone. All of our problems have been fixed.

But...

I *have to* say that.

I don't want to face the real truth that something is wrong.

What is this hollow feeling I have inside of me? This void? I know that there should be something I should say, or do, but I don't know what it is. I own all the right things.

I own all the right things.

Isn't...that...enough?

My stereo, my books, my posters, they comfort me, like paper idols.

There's a rumbling coming from somewhere off in the fog. I can hear it, and I may not be the only one. It is dark. It is evil. And it is spreading.

Television promises me that all of my problems will be solved within 30 seconds. I listen to the parables, parables of lonliness, of shame and embarrassment. I watch in awe of the miracles that the great god Certs performs. I have bought the deoderants and toothpastes. My shopping cart runneth over.

My priest promises me that I can be cleansed of my evil sins (*what did I do*?) by a single statement of faith in a person born 2000 years ago, who I don't know, and don't suspect I will. But I go to church.

My friends promise me that ingesting certain herbs and chemicals in certain ways will make me, what is it they call it, "high?" I don't feel elevated. Do they? I smoke a lot.

My parents, teachers, my grades proclaim security and the promise of some future Valhalla if I manage to stay in college this time. I go through the motions. I study. I go to class.

But
I
don't
know
what
it
is
the
things
I
do.

I don't know why I do them.

I pretend I'm happy most of the time. I laugh, even sometimes out of context, to show the joy bubbling up inside of me. I assume certain stances, certain prejudices-- they blanket me, comfort me. I make clever jokes. I am afraid to think too much.

I will find out something about my world I don't want to know, should I examine things too closely. It will scare me. I am afraid to think. To feel.

I want to march on proudly, proudly, as if this were indeed the best of all possible worlds. But my steps falter...

Perhaps I should start from the beginning.

Yes, I still read comics.

That, *that* is the hardest and yet the easiest to explain.

How can it be both hard *and* easy?

How can anything, be *both*?

How can something be *both* alive and dead?

How can someone be both angry and too tired for anger?

I have a memory which haunts me. The scene is this: I am in Mrs. Slack's kindergarten class. I am 5. I am outside a circle of children, approaching hesitantly. They are building a tower out of blocks. Red blocks. Blue blocks. Other colors. They are doing it wrong. It is going to fall. I have in my mind a better way. I want to tell them, "Here...you don't want it to crash..."

I approach.

I articulate it innocently and quietly, my plans. I am loudly and efficiently dismissed, by my peers.

I try again. This time is different, my suggestion is louder, a command, a shout. No effect, it has. Mrs. Slack hovers, an avenging angel, an angel of power, layers of fat for wings, gray and sagging skin like feathers-- she tells me to be quiet.

To be quiet.

I am silenced.

I go home.

I lock myself in my closet.

I scream.

I scream loud animal screams, furious and sad.

Yesterday, 25 years later, I locked myself again in a closet and screamed. I don't know how to articulate rage. I don't know how to articulate sadness.

Sometimes, oh, sometimes, I am very clever. I am witty and ironic. My hat tucked down low, eyes emerald. The Panama Kid. I think then, that one song, one joke, one story will change the way people feel. I am screwed up tight in the power of miracles.

Still.

But most of the time I scream in closets.

Which method is best? Answer: They may be equally impotent.

Yes, I still read comics.

I believe in heroes, abstracted and allegorical, I cherish them. Because I know that as real life heroes die, and heroism and idealism becomes a thing for storybooks, comics may be the only place left where things will go right. So I seek refuge in them.

Yes, I Still Read Comics...

Do you know what it is like to have wanted to die for a cause, and then one morning wake up and realize that your fight had no more significance than a mid-season football game?

At a march in Birmingham, Alabama, in 1968, I held hands with a young black man, and I felt something, something, travel between us. I can't explain it. I met him last week, he sold me insurance. I shook his hand then, too. I wrote him a check. It travelled between us.

I had heroes.

Heroes with names like Ochs, Seeger, Paxton, Dylan, Ginsberg, Kerouac, Rubin, Hoffman, Kunstler, Kennedy, King...

I stayed up all night in the rain because of something called Vietnam (you may have read about it in the papers). I spoke out naively against racism and prejudice, crime and poverty. I thought that love would conquer all.

Surprise.

It didn't.

How can anyone deal with the possibility that the most precious moment in his life was meaningless, a passing fad?

As the artist Da Vinci neared his death, he wrote in the margins of his notebooks, again and again, this: "Tell me if anything was ever done." It haunted him.

TELL ME IF ANYTHING WAS EVER DONE.

But there was a feeling which mattered more than the rate and evidence of social change.

What mattered most, I think, was that we did it together.

Brothers and sisters.

Can you imagine a family that large?

By holding up two fingers in a v-shaped manner I could meet and converse with many new relatives I never thought I had.

The writer Kurt Vonnegut, Jr. often proposes plans for "artificial extended families," families with meaningful, rather than random bonds.

I think the families are breaking up.

We no longer fight for what we believe.

Perhaps we no longer believe in anything worth fighting for.

But worst of all, in our beliefs or our nothingness, we are sadly, alone.

We are a country of buyers and sellers, servants of the Corporations. We so fear not getting a job or getting enough money, that we forget we are making ourselves slaves to it.

Where are the new heroes? Where are the new freedom fighters?

Yes, I still read comics. Because those heroes have the thing I lack. The power.

Yes, yes, yes, I have dreamed dreams. I can see a better world in my mind's eye, a world without crime and poverty, prejudice and hate. A society based on love. Powered by joy, by laughter, by idealism. An electrical energy.

But someone has pulled the plug.

People, once, they used to be driven.

They used to believe in the right lies. Lies like freedom and justice, and love. We're so much wiser now.

People used to care.

Apathy, the Kryptonite of the 70's, has fallen, like an avalanche, unto us.

I went back to college 2 years ago, to Rutgers, which at one time, had earned the label of "Berkeley, East."

I found out that they are now in the business of manufacturing diplomas and grade-point averages instead of thinking, caring human beings. Hi ho.

I found that a plasticized, emotionless music, called "disco" (is that right?) had replaced the stirring anthems. I found that job seminars had replaced the "rap sessions" and "rallies." Bully. Bully for them.

And I thought, just briefly, that I would wake up from this nightmare. That I would be back in 1968, that I would be locked arm in arm with others, an invulnerable line of bodies, glowing, skin warm and tight, voices singing in unison, softly but intently, "We... shall...overcome..."

I think we lost more than the war in Vietnam with the arrival of the 70's.

I have this romantic dream of the 60's which won't go away, until the 60's are reborn.

Can anyone help me?

Is anyone listening?

I am outside a circle of men, approaching hesitantly. They are building towers out of bodies. White bodies. Black bodies. Other colors. They are doing it wrong. It is going to fall. I have in my mind a better way. I want to tell them, "Here... you don't want it to crash..."

"Do you..."

I approach.

That's the end of another AFTA. Why do I have the strange suspicion I'm writing a novel every 2 months or so? Oh, well.

How 'bout we gather together, a group of about a hundred or so (nothing too large, since we want to be comfortable) and do this all again in a couple of months.

I'm gonna need some bread from all of you, though, as much as if I could, I would do this all for free. Just something to co expenses, mind you. Nothing too outrageous. A subscription would be very, very fine. You can look at the nice ad Fred Hembeck did up for me (which Alan Light refused to print in TBG as a Dateline: column).

The next issue of AFTA will be out November 15. If you have any suggestions to improve it, let me know. I listen.

If you like what I'm trying to do with AFTA, please say so.

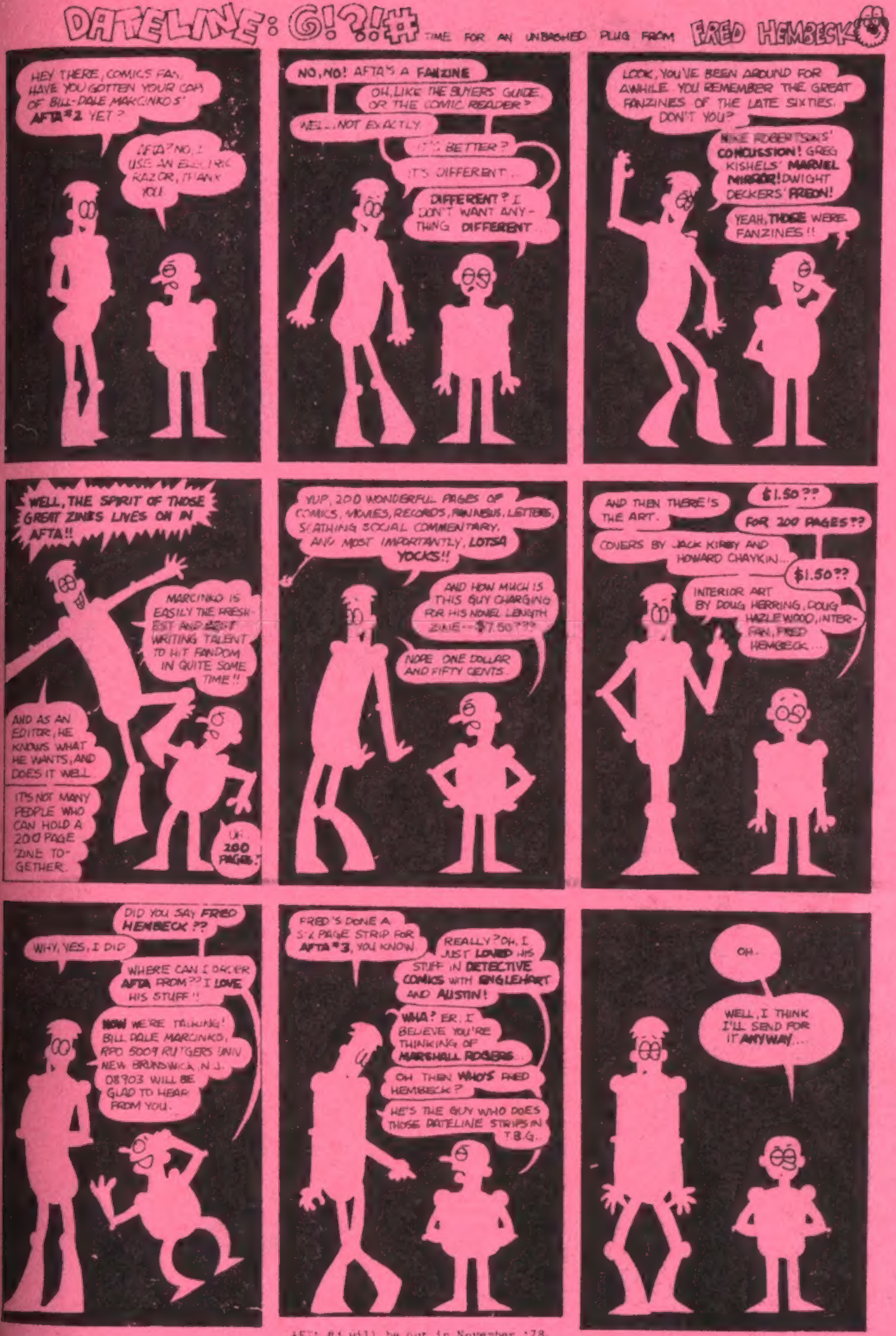
If you want to be more of a part of it, and write something for me, say so.

But most important of all, spread the word.

Tell me about yourself. Tell me about your life, too. Allow me to be your friend. That, contrary to what you may have heard from others, IS WHAT IT IS ALL ABOUT IN LIFE.

We're gonna try to have another meeting here in a few months, with some old friends back to talk some more. Some new friends. Perhaps I'm presuming too much, but I would like you to be part of it. You wouldn't want to miss it. Mr. Rupert Peach has a plan to save AFTA, Clavell Spim is not mentioned at all because he does indeed go away, and Im gonna have a lot of fun too. I'm even gonna pose for a ROLLING STONE cover, too, just in case they plan on doing a feature on me.

I love you, Bill-Dale


DATELINE: G!?!#
TIME FOR AN UNBASHED PLUG FROM FRED HEMBECK
HEY THERE, COMICS FAN, HAVE YOU GOTTEN YOUR COPY OF BILL-DALE MARCINKO'S' AFTA #2 YET?
AFTA? NO, I USE AN ELECTRIC RAZOR, THANK YOU.
NO, NO! AFTA'S A FANZINE
OH, LIKE THE BUYERS' GUIDE OR THE COMIC READER?
WELL...NOT EXACTLY.
IT'S BETTER?
IT'S DIFFERENT...
DIFFERENT? I DON'T WANT ANY-THING DIFFERENT.
LOOK, YOU'VE BEEN AROUND FOR AWHILE. YOU REMEMBER THE GREAT FANZINES OF THE LATE SIXTIES, DON'T YOU?
MIKE ROBERTSON'S' CONCUSSION! GREG KISHELS' MARVEL MIRROR! DWIGHT DECKERS' FREON!
YEAH, THOSE WERE FANZINES!!
WELL, THE SPIRIT OF THOSE GREAT ZINES LIVES ON IN AFTA!!
MARCINKO IS EASILY THE FRESH-EST AND BEST WRITING TALENT TO HIT FANDOM IN QUITE SOME TIME!!
AND AS AN EDITOR, HE KNOWS WHAT HE WANTS, AND DOES IT WELL.
IT'S NOT MANY PEOPLE WHO CAN HOLD A 200 PAGE 'ZINE TO-GETHER.
UH. 200 PAGES.
YUP, 200 WONDERFUL PAGES OF COMICS, MOVIES, RECORDS, FAN NEWS, LETTERS, SCATHING SOCIAL COMMENTARY, AND MOST IMPORTANTLY, LOTSA YOCKS!!
AND HOW MUCH IS THIS GUY CHARGING FOR HIS NOVEL LENGTH ZINE--$7.50???
NOPE. ONE DOLLAR AND FIFTY CENTS.
AND THEN THERE'S THE ART.
$1.50??
FOR 200 PAGES??
COVERS BY JACK KIRBY AND HOWARD CHAYKIN...
$1.50??
INTERIOR ART BY DOUG HERRING, DOUG HAZLEWOOD, INTER-FAN, FRED HEMBECK...
DID YOU SAY FRED HEMBECK??
WHY, YES, I DID.
WHERE CAN I ORDER AFTA FROM?? I LOVE HIS STUFF!!
NOW WE'RE TALKING! BILL DALE MARCINKO, RPO 5007 RUTGERS UNIV NEW BRUNSWICK, N.J. 08903 WILL BE GLAD TO HEAR FROM YOU.
FRED'S DONE A SIX PAGE STRIP FOR AFTA #3, YOU KNOW.
REALLY? OH, I JUST LOVED HIS STUFF IN DETECTIVE COMICS WITH ENGLEHART AND AUSTIN!
WHA? ER, I BELIEVE YOU'RE THINKING OF MARSHALL ROGERS...
OH. THEN WHO'S FRED HEMBECK?
HE'S THE GUY WHO DOES THOSE DATELINE STRIPS IN T.B.G..
OH.
WELL, I THINK I'LL SEND FOR IT ANYWAY...

AFTA #3 will be out in November '78.

#1-5 - $6.00
#2-5 - $5.00

#3-5 - $4.00
#1 - $1.00 (plus 50¢ post.)

2 - $1.50 (plus 50¢ post)
#1-2 - $2.50 (postpaid)

NAME ______________________________

ADDRESS ______________________________

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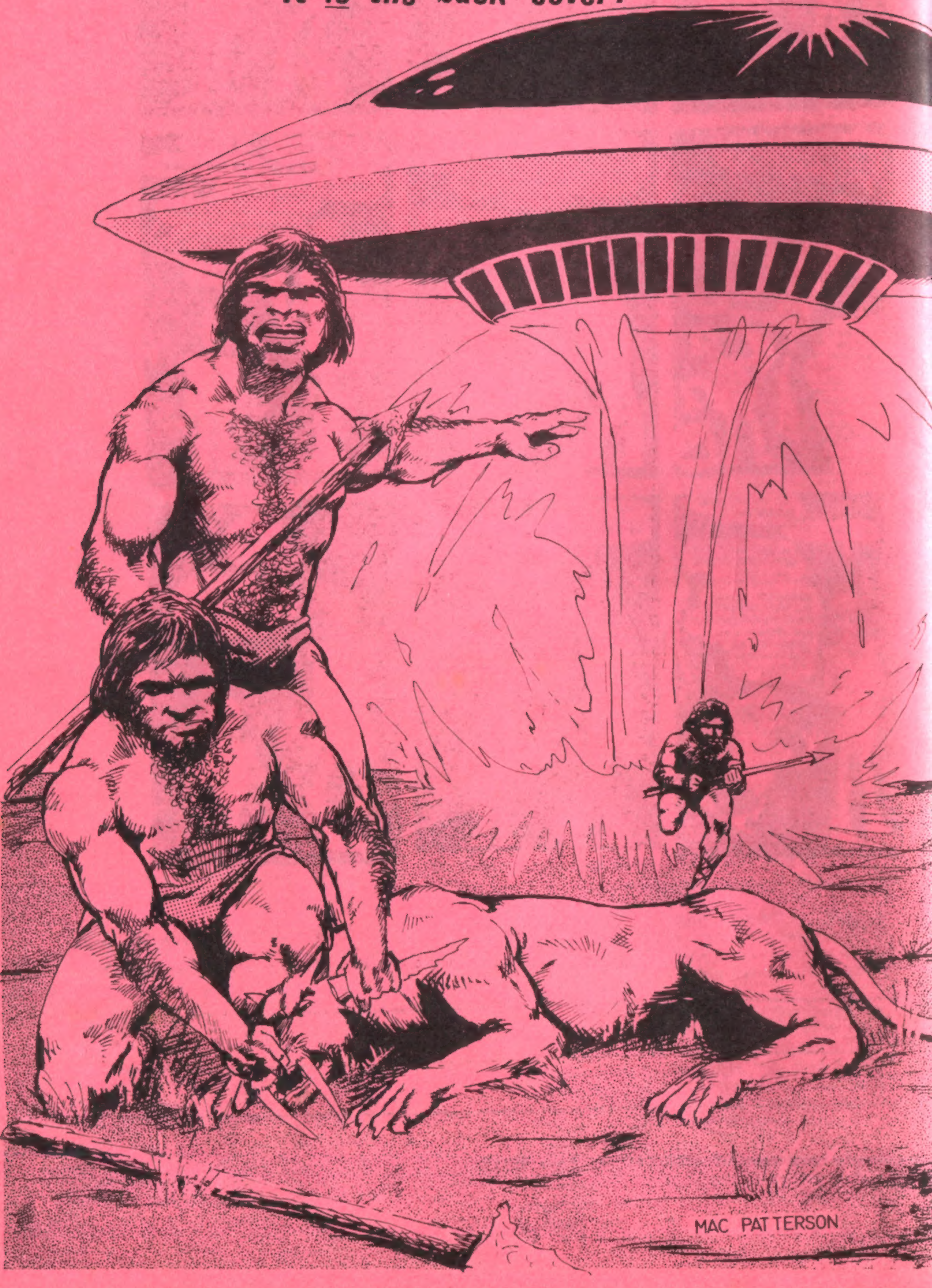
Where you got this copy of AFTA (if not from Bill):

What ya expect, bimbo?
It is the back cover!


MAC PATTERSON